

LORD OXFORD
WAS
“ SHAKESPEARE ”



OXFORD.

OXFORD. Covered.

"ASHBOURNE."



OXFORD.

"ASHBOURNE." Covered.

"ASHBOURNE"

THE ASHBOURNE PORTRAIT SHOWS A MAN TWENTY YEARS OLDER THAN OXFORD

The features of the Welbeck portrait are superimposed upon the "Ashbourne" portrait; below, the reverse process, i.e. the features of the "Ashbourne" portrait are superimposed up in the Welbeck portrait, the result being revelation of identity between Oxford and the original of the Ashbourne Shakespeare. These composite portraits are reproduced by kind permission of the Rev. Father C. S. de Vere Beauclerk, S.J.

Lord Oxford was "Shakespeare"

A SUMMING UP BY LIEUT.-COLONEL
MONTAGU W. DOUGLAS
C.S.I., C.I.E.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CANON G. H. RENDALL

B.D., LITT.D., LL.D.
CHECKED 1971

Second Edition

Considerably amended, and including the
"Welbeck" and "Ashbourne" Portraits;
and Illustrations of the de Vere Country
by the Author

"Vero nil verius"

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PREFACE

THE object of the publication of this outline is to convey to the reader a general impression of the case for Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, as "Shakespeare"; and thus influence him towards a study of the problem as dealt with in one or other of the works dealing fully with the subject (Appendix A).

I owe my acknowledgments to the authors whose views I have freely quoted, with the above object; and my grateful thanks for valued advice to Colonel B. R. Ward, C.M.G., Captain B. M. Ward, and my friend, Doctor Cecil Reddie.

The Second Edition

My sincere thanks are again due to Captain B. M. Ward for invaluable advice; and also to Canon G. W. Rendall for his comprehensive "Foreword" and helpful revision.

This Edition is published as the result of further research by Members of "the Fellowship."

The principal additions are: (1) the "Welbeck" and "Ashbourne" portraits, already published by Mr. P. Allen. (2) Further evidence regarding the chronology of the Plays, and the composition of the later Plays, which appeared after 1604.

NOTICE TO THE READER

I HAVE followed, as a matter of convenience, the practice of writing "Shakespeare" in references to the author of the *Plays and Poems*, and Shakspeare in those to William Shakspeare of Stratford.

The following works are quoted in the text. The titles will not be continually repeated:

"Shakespeare" Identified, J. T. Looney.

The Mystery of "Mr. W. H.", Colonel B. R. Ward, C.M.G.

The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, Captain B. M. Ward.

By Percy Allen:

(1) *The Case for Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, as "Shakespeare."*

(2) *The Oxford-Shakespeare Case Corroborated.*

(3) *The Life Story of "Edward de Vere" as "William Shakespeare."*

(4) *The Plays of Shakespeare and Chapman in Relation to French History.*

Shakespeare Sonnets and Edward de Vere, G. H. Rendall, B.D., Litt.D., LL.D.

Shakespeare Through Oxford Glasses, Admiral H. H. Holland, C.B.

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Shakespeare, "Oxford and Elizabethan Times,"

Admiral H. H. Holland, C.B.

Shakespeare Plays in the Order of the Writing, Mrs.

Eva Turner Clark.

William Shakespeare, Sir Edward Chambers.

Is There a Shakespeare Problem? Sir George

Greenwood, K.C.

Seven Shakespeares, Gilbert Slater, M.A., D.Sc.,

F.R.H.S.

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*The drawings of the Keep, Castle Hedingham, were made
with the kind permission of Mrs. Majendie.*

FOREWORD

By CANON GERALD H. RENDALL,
B.D., LITT.D., LL.D.

THE issue of the Shakespeare Folio in 1623 was an outstanding event in the annals of English literature; but not till the century was drawing to its close did Dryden proclaim its supreme importance, and command just appreciation of its dramatic values. A century later Malone inaugurated the era of textual and verbal exegesis, and so prepared the way for that Higher Criticism which investigates the sources, parentage and surroundings to which the writings owed their existence. These lines of enquiry, pursued with indefatigable zest by Halliwell, Furnivall and others received a startling impulse from the proposed ascription (1857) of the Plays (and other works) to Francis Bacon. Amid the storms of controversy which raged round this suggestion, the Baconians failed at vital points to make good their case; but out of the hurly-burly certain plain facts gained new prominence, among them: (1) the scantiness and weakness of the data favouring the claims of William Shakspeare, and the grave if not insuperable objections to which they lay open; and (2) the intimate connexion

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of the Plays with the literary circles, Academic and Aristocratic, attached to the Elizabethan Court.

In 1920 a wholly new turn was given to the debate by Mr. J. T. Looney's volume identifying Shakespeare with Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford; and Captain Ward's full-length study of his life and letters yielded a rich store of materials for just appreciation of his public career and place in literature. Viewed from this angle, the Shakespearean Plays, Poems and Sonnets have been subjected to fresh analysis and scrutiny, and have yielded evidences and corroborations of the most arresting kind. In setting and handling, in historical and topical allusions, in staged incidents, delineations and personalities, in literary links, strictures and affiliations, they reproduce or reflect traits and episodes that tally perfectly with the Earl of Oxford's own experiences. He becomes a unifying centre on whom and from whom the threads of motive underlie the more subtle problems of temperament and personality. Already their bewildering variety and range threaten to defeat their own end, and daunt the enquirer at the outset.

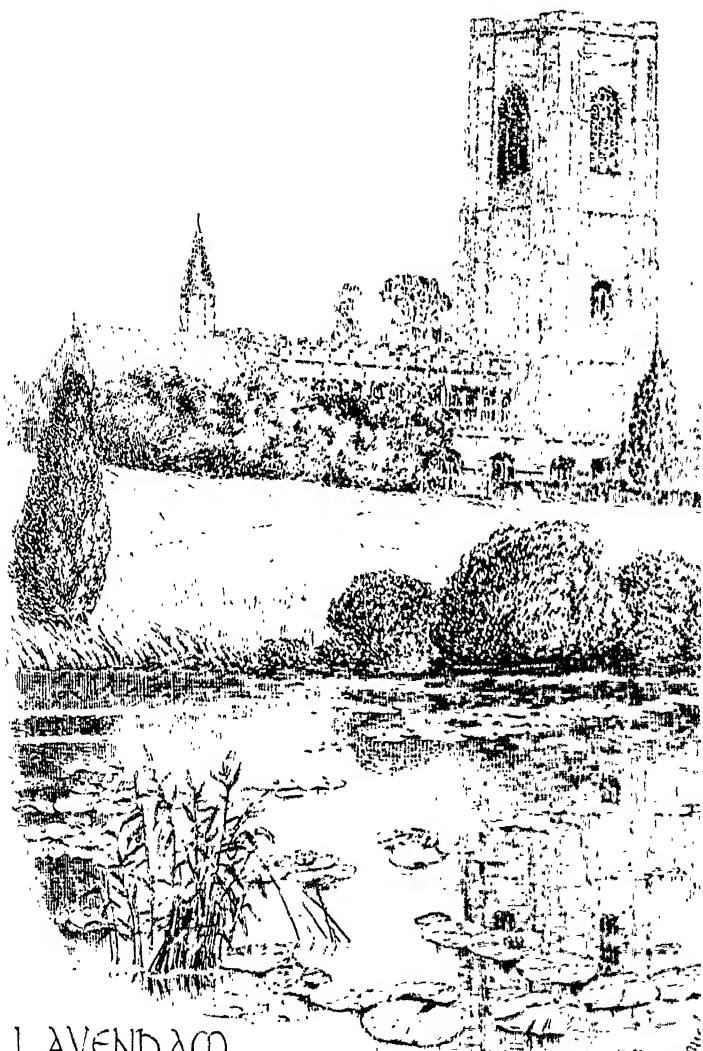
He will be grateful to Colonel Douglas for this clear survey of the field. The proofs, or rather the interpretations, offered are, it will be seen, cumulative, and vary much in cogency; some carry conviction, others are provisional or ten-

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tative; and in not a few instances Colonel Douglas leaves alternative solutions side by side. But no other volume of the same compass provides so lucid and compact a résumé of the results obtained. Without excessive elaboration and without abuse of defendants, the author presents the case for the plaintiffs in terms which will enable every reader to supplement or check the inferences which his own studies will supply. New doors of poetic insight will be thrown open, and

“Beauty peep through lattice of sear’d age.”

G. H. R.



LAVENDHAM.

PARTLY BUILT BY 13th EARL.

TOMB OF 7th EARL.

M. D. 17

Lord Oxford was "Shakespeare"

CHAPTER I

THE TRADITIONAL CASE

THE Founder, and "onlie begetter" of the proposition set forth in the ensuing pages, that Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, was the author of the Plays and Poems attributed to William Shakspeare of Stratford, was Mr. J. T. Looney (in "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*). Miss Delia Bacon had in 1857 published the *Philosophy of Shakespeare's Plays Unfolded*, in which the Earl of Oxford was mentioned; but only as a member of a secret group of authors. This consisted of Sir Walter Raleigh as head, Francis Bacon, Lord Paget, Lord Buckhurst, and the Earl of Oxford as members.

Certain students of the Shakespeare problem, attracted by Mr. Looney's arguments, founded in 1922 a Shakespeare Fellowship, under the Presidency of the late Sir George Greenwood. The object was to unite all lovers of Shakespeare who were dissatisfied with the prevailing Stratfordian orthodoxy; and who desired further research to be applied to the problem. The

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movement rapidly gathered way, as may be realised from the list of works published by the members since the Fellowship was founded. (Appendix A.)

The general public interested in Shakespeare may be put in three groups:

First, the supporters of the orthodox and traditional view who, in spite of the sea of conjecture that besets them, cling to the belief that William Shakspeare, the "Stratford rustic," as they call him, left his home on some unknown date after 1586; and, making his first appearance in London in 1592, published the poem *Venus and Adonis* in 1593; that thereafter, during a period varying from eleven (1604) to nineteen years (1612), he produced the remaining works generally attributed to "Shakespeare."

Second, those that are aware that the credentials of the Stratford rustic are doubtful; and, like Emerson, cannot "marry him to his verse"; but in the absence of any accepted substitute, dispense with the identity of the Poet, and are content with the name "Shakespeare," and the legacy of the Plays and Poems.

Third, those that are convinced of the strength of the negative case as stated by Sir George Greenwood (in *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*), and by others; and are certain that, whoever may have been the author of those masterpieces, the Stratford rustic was not the man. In this

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group are those who find in Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, the "genius not of an age but for all time" who wrote under the pseudonym of "William Shakespeare" or "Shakespeare."

The following pages contain in outline the evidence supporting this claim.

In his recent work, *William Shakespeare*, the verdict of Sir E. Chambers on the early life of Shakspeare of Stratford is as follows:

Whatever imprint Shakespeare's Warwickshire contemporaries may have left upon his imagination inevitably eludes us. The main fact in his earlier career is still that unexplored hiatus, and who shall say what adventures, material and spiritual, six or eight crowded Elizabethan years may have brought him. It is no use guessing. As in so many other historical investigations, after all the careful scrutiny of clues and all the patient balancing of possibilities, the last word for a self-respecting scholarship can only be that of nescience.

"Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul,
When hot for certainties in this our life."

The imaginative gesture of "adventures, material and spiritual," suggests a more attractive picture than that dependent on tradition, but hardly more convincing. There still lingers the vision—presented by Greenwood (p. 235):

A young provincial, with such smattering of education as he may have procured during some four

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or five years at a Free Grammar school; . . . speaking the dialect of his native country, comes to London in 1587, a penniless wanderer, straight from the society of the boors and petty tradesmen of obscure and illiterate Stratford; becomes successively "horseholder" outside, and "servitor" inside, one of the London playhouses (and such playhouses!); obtains a place in a company, is constantly playing to London audiences, or touring in the provinces; an actor-manager (as we are told) with shares in two theatres, and with a keen eye to business, and, with all this, turning out each year on an average two plays, but, in the earlier years, a much greater number, all belonging to the supreme rank of literature—marvellous works, "not of an age, but for all time,"—replete, if not with classical learning (as some high authorities insist), at any rate with profound knowledge of the world, and of mankind, and of the philosophy of life and human nature, and redolent of the highest culture, besides wondrous courtly polished and scholarly poems, composed in quite early days, but marked in the same or even higher degree by the same learning and the same culture; yet remaining *nonem et umbra*, and nothing more for posterity—except indeed for that little knowledge of his life history which we could so well spare.

We are thus left to conjecture, as best we may, where and how William of Stratford acquired his profound learning, culture, knowledge of mankind, and much else; and, as Professor Lefranc

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comments, accept two psychological miracles: the transformation of the "Stratford rustic" into the cultured poet of aristocratic outlook, and his re-transformation into the malt speculator and money-lender of his native town.

The strength of the negative case can best be realised by reading Greenwood's book, above cited, and so no detailed reference to it will be made in this summary. He expressed his final view as follows:

The more I read these marvellous works, the more deeply I am impressed with the certainty that the man who wrote them was a man of wide reading, much learning, and high culture. I am more and more convinced of the "highly cultured mind" as the necessary condition precedent of a "Shakespeare." My reason revolts against the postulate of the unlettered and untravelled man, who knew no country and no language but his own.

Here may be added, as stressed by Greenwood, that we have not a single specimen of writing from the pen of Shakspeare of Stratford except six signatures which are "in the old English character," and few impartial observers would deny that they are "terrible scrawls."

They are the following:—

To a deposition in

1612:

Willm Shakp

To two legal documents in 1613:

{ William Shakspe
Wm Shakspe

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| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| From the Will: | { William Shakspere |
| | { Willm Shakspere |
| | { By me, William Shakspeare |

Many doubt the authenticity of the last three signatures.

Greenwood contrasts the writing of Ben Jonson, Sylvester, and Spenser, in their cultivated Italian style, and Shakspere's Gothic scrawl.

Greenwood's view is that the name "Shakespeare" or "Shake-speare" was adopted as a mask-name in 1593; and "that many subsequently wrote under that name without let or hindrance is a matter of *fact*." Several men of high position, including one of supreme genius, also used the name. The actor-manager of Stratford acted as honest broker for these plays, and put them on the stage. They became "Shakespeare's Plays," and the authorship was generally attributed to him, though many of them were not Shakespearean. The facts were known by Ben Jonson, and in literary and Court circles.

The same uncertainty applies to the year of Shakspere's original departure as to his return to Stratford, when he gave undivided attention to his business as Maltster, built up during his years of inspiration. But, putting aside the doubts of tradition, it is well to record the facts known to be true, drawn up by Mr. William Poel, founder and director of the Elizabethan Stage Society:

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1564. Baptism, 26 April. "Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspere."
1582. Marriage, "William Shagspere and Anne Hathwey" 28 November.
1583. Daughter's baptism, 26 May. "Susanna daughter to William Shakspere."
1585. Twins' baptism, 2 February. "Hamnet and Judith, sonne and daughter to William Shakspere."
1595. Named as one of the actors paid 15 March for showing before the Queen at Christmas "twoe severall comedies or interludes."
1596. Assessed 13s. 4d. on property valued at £5 in the parish of St. Helens; he was now lodging at Bankside.
1596. Son dies; buried 11 August. First application to Heralds' College for coat of arms.
1597. Buys "New Place" and an acre of land for £60 (present value £600).
1598. Acts in Ben Jonson's comedy *Every Man in His Humour*.
1598. Called Gentleman and Householder in town documents of Stratford. Richard Quiney wants to borrow £30 from him. Coat of Arms granted by Heralds' College. Mother's claim to the Arms of Ardern of Park Hall refused, 1599. Father dies intestate, buried 8 September, 1601.
1598. (Wm. Shackespere is recorded as having ten quarters of malt. (Chambers.) These

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were lean years. Maltsters speculated, and the Justices of the Peace were directed to "harry them.")

1599. Globe Playhouse built. The two Burbages held five shares, Shakspeare, Heminge, Phillips, Pope, and Kempe five shares between them.
1602. Buys 107 acres of land near Stratford for £320 (present value £3,200). Also a cottage and a quarter acre of land at the back of "New Place."
1603. Second on the list of players receiving scarlet cloth as King's servants. Acts in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*.
1604. (Sued Philip Rogers for £1, 17s. 10d. for malt supplied.)
1605. Buys for £440 (present value £4,400) half the unexpired lease of Stratford tithes. Lodging now or recently with Mountjoy, a wig-maker in Silver Street, Cripplegate. Receives 30s. from a fellow player Phillips for a memorial ring.
1607. His brother Edmund, a player, buried at St. Saviour's, Southwark, the great bell being tolled, 31 December.
1608. Godfather of William Walker, son of Henry Walker, Mercer and Alderman. Takes one-seventh share in Blackfriars Theatre. His share in the Globe Theatre reduced to one-twelfth and ultimately to one-fourteenth.

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1609. Wins case against John Addenbrooke, for payment of £6 and £1, 5s. od. costs, who then absconded, and Shakspeare sues Thomas Horneby, who had gone bail for debtor.
1610. Buys 20 acres from John Combe.
1612. Signs affidavit in the Bellot *v.* Mountjoy case. Described as of Stratford-on-Avon, Gentleman, of the age of 48 or thereabouts. (Signature is "Wilm Shaxpr.")
1613. Buys house in Blackfriars for £140 (present value £1,400).
1614. A legatee in John Combe's will. Secures from John Combe's heir, William, a deed of indemnity against personal loss if Common-fields are enclosed. Does not support protest against enclosure.
1614. "My cosen Shakspeare comyng yesterday to towne I went to see him how he did." T. Greene, 17 November.
1616. Receives first draft of his will, 25 January: revises and signs will, 25 March: died 23 April. Assets: £350 in cash, personal belongings, and estate bought for £1,200 (present value £12,000). The Mayor and leading townsmen sign as witnesses. Buried in chancel of Parish Church. Entry in register: "Burials, 1616, 25 April, Will Shakspeare, gent."

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Although Shakspeare bought his house "New Place" for £60 (present value £600) in 1597, a transaction completed in 1602, it is not possible to determine the year in which he finally settled in Stratford. Chambers (p. 84) thinks he may be regarded as still making his headquarters in London in 1604, "but more free than of old for occasional sojourn in Stratford." It is thought that his final years in Stratford date from 1610, that thereafter he wrote in collaboration with Fletcher; but ceased writing in 1613. He, however, as shown above, sued a man, Rogers, for value of malt sold, and for a money debt, in Stratford in 1604, purchased the lease of a parcel of tithes for £440 in 1605, and there was further litigation in Stratford in 1608-09. The purchase of "New Place" in 1597 suggests that he intended to live there within reasonable time; and there is no record of any permanent residence in London after 1596-97. David Masson, in his work, *Shakespeare Personally*, divides his life into three periods: (1) 1564-85, Stratford-on-Avon; (2) 1586-1604, London; (3) 1604-16, Stratford-on-Avon. In the *National Encyclopædia* it is recorded:

There is no doubt he never meant to return to London except for business after 1604.

He evidently made Stratford his headquarters in 1604; but was free "for an occasional sojourn"

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in London. The year 1610 is taken for permanent residence in Stratford in order to account for the later plays; but it will be shown that all the plays were in existence before 1604. The idea that they were written *currente calamo* is thus disposed of by Mr. Swinburne:

Of all the vulgar errors, the most wanton, the most wilful, and the most resolutely tenacious of life is . . . the belief that Shakespeare threw off Hamlet as an eagle may moult a feather or a fool may break a jest . . . scene by scene, line for line, stroke upon stroke, and touch after touch, he went over all the old laboured ground again.

If we are to be guided by the above opinion, it would seem incredible that Shakspeare of Stratford, whether he retired in 1604 or 1610, could have been the great dramatist and poet.

The first work published by "Shakespeare," *Venus and Adonis*, appeared in 1593, and *Lucrece* the following year. The *Sonnets* were written "probably from 1595 to 1599-1600" (Chambers, p. 73), and according to the latest orthodox view twenty-eight of the thirty-six Folio plays were either published or appeared by 1605.

Further, it should be realised that Shakspeare of Stratford was apparently a fully occupied man; an actor, actor-manager, speculator in malt and in property, also a money-lender; and, having (according to Sir S. Lee) inherited his father's

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love for litigation, was a somewhat avid creditor and frequently in court.

We are expected to associate with this environment and such busy distractions, the composition of the *Sonnets*, with their personal revelations, two long classical poems, and thirty-six plays. A more probable "Shakespeare" would seem to be the scholar, poet, dramatist Earl, living in seclusion during the last sixteen years of his life, 1588-1604, devoting his time to literature and the revision of his plays:

But that same gentle spirit from whose pen
Large streams of honie and sweet Nectar growe,
Scorning the boldness of such base-borne men,
Which dare their follies forth so rashly throwe,
Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell,
Than so himself to mockerie to sell.

A preceding line,

Our pleasant Willy, Ah, is dead of late,
is identified with Sidney, the above passage with Oxford. (Spenser, *Teares of the Muses*. 1591.)

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE AND PERSONALITY OF THE EARL OF OXFORD

"Of all the great Elizabethans, who made the sixteenth century the heroic age of English History, both in action and letters, there is not one so little known and so universally misjudged as Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford. At the hands of contemporaries he received both scurrilous abuse and unstinted praise, and therefore it is perhaps not surprising that posterity should have accepted the first and doubted the second." Thus writes Captain Ward in his preface to *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* (1928). As a result of these misrepresentations Lee writes: "Oxford was wayward and extravagant, violent and boorish, yet evinced a genuine interest in music; he wrote verses of much lyric beauty, was also a dramatist, but none of his works survive." Froude refers briefly to "Burghley's ill-conditioned son-in-law." Captain Ward's researches, however, have revealed a very different personality, and shown that many stories about the Earl were fictitious, the work of enemies; and thrown a new light on the important part played by him in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

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The de Vere family settled in England before the Conquest. Aubrey de Vere fought at the battle of Hastings, and married a half-sister of the Conqueror. John de Vere helped to win the battle of Bosworth Field for "the red rose" of Lancaster. For twenty generations, over a period of five hundred years, the de Veres handed on the Earldom in continuous male descent.

Edward de Vere, born on April 12, 1550, was only twelve years old when his father died. He was made a royal ward, and placed in charge of Sir William Cecil, afterwards the all-powerful Lord Burghley. His education had been in the hands of Sir Thomas Smith the statesman, scholar, and author, and of his uncle, Arthur Golding. The latter's best-known work was a translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which Edward de Vere in after-life drew upon when writing the Shakespearean poems and plays. As a result of this early grounding, at the age of nine he was entered as an "impubes" fellow-commoner of Queen's College, Cambridge. A month after his father's death he was moved from the hereditary Hedingham Castle in Essex to the stately residence of the Cecils at Westminster, near the site of the former Hotel Cecil. His early education included Latin, French, cosmography, writing and drawing; and his leisure such "commendable exercises" as riding, shooting, dancing, or walking. At times he would canter down the lanes to his village of

Kensington (hence "Earl's Court"), where he would fly his hawks, and return with a bag of herons and partridges. Occasionally the Queen would send for her "Turk," as she called him, to play on the virginals or dance with her. But even at this early age he would be often found in the library. When he was only thirteen and a half, his tutor, Laurence Nowell, Dean of Lichfield, writes to Burghley: "I clearly see that my work for the Earl of Oxford cannot be much longer required." He was then sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, and received an Hon. M.A. degree at the early age of fourteen and a half years. The law claimed his attention next. In 1567 we find admitted to Gray's Inn Lord Oxford, Philip Sidney, and John Manners, brother of the Earl of Rutland. Oxford's tastes were literary; in his list of expenditure in 1569-70, when he was nineteen, we find one entry "Geneva bible gilt, a Chaucer, Plutarch's Works in French, with other books and papers," another, "Tully's and Plautus' works in folio."

In 1570, when Catholic risings were being suppressed in the north of England, the Earl applied that he might serve his "Prince and Country," and was sent to join the staff of Sussex. He thereafter became the staunch friend and supporter of Sussex at Court in his feuds with the Earl of Leicester, aided by his nephew and heir, Philip Sidney. He was in 1573 in high favour with the

Queen, "who delighteth more in his personage and his dancing, and his valiantness than any other." The Earl of Oxford took part in the tournaments in 1571 and in 1581, and on both occasions was awarded the prize. In 1571, aged twenty-one, he was married to Anne Cecil, the daughter of Lord Burghley, in Westminster Abbey, the Queen being present. Burghley thus writes of his son-in-law to the Earl of Rutland:

I confess to your Lordship I do honour him so dearly from my heart as I do my own son, and in any case that may touch him for his honour and weal, I shall think him mine own interest therein. And surely my Lord, by dealing with him, I find that which I often heard of your Lordship, there is much more in him of understanding than any stranger to him would think. And for my part I find that whereof I take comfort, in his wit and knowledge, grown by good observation.

The massacre of St. Bartholomew and the furious persecution of the Protestants in the Low Countries led to retaliation in England, and the enrolment of a band of volunteers to assist the Dutch against the Spaniards. Oxford urges his father-in-law to find him a post on active service. His uncle, Arthur Golding, a staunch Protestant, who had recently dedicated to him his translation of *Calvin's Version of the Psalms of David*, in the hopes of influencing him towards Protestantism, approved; but the request was refused, and



ST NICHOLAS
CASTLE HEDINGHAM
TOMB OF 15th EARL.

Oxford devoted himself to literature. He was, however, more attracted to the spirit of the Renaissance than to the issues of the Reformation, and sought his ideals in the principles of Honour, Justice, and Chivalry set forth by Balthazar Castiglione in his treatise on *The Perfect Courtier*. When, therefore, he found that his Cambridge tutor, Bartholomew Clark, was translating his favourite author into Latin, he wrote an eloquent Latin preface, much eulogised by Gabriel Harvey some years later.

He so much enjoyed in the manuscript, a translation of *Cardanus' Comfort*, by Thomas Bedingfield, that he published this also, with a preparatory poem and letter, addressed:

To my loving friend Thomas Bedingfield Esquire,
one of Her Majesty's Pensioners.

After I had perused your letters, good Master Beddingfield, finding in them your request for differing from the desert of your labour, I could not choose but greatly doubt whether it were better for me to yield to your desire, or execute mine own intention towards the publishing of your book. . . . And when you examine yourself—what doth avail a mass of gold to be continually imprisoned in your bags and never to be employed to your use? Wherefore we have this Latin proverb: *scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter*. What doth avail the tree unless it yield fruit unto another? What doth avail the vine unless another delighteth in the grape? What doth avail the rose unless another

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took pleasure in the smell? Why should this tree be accounted better than that tree but for the goodness of his fruit? Why should this rose be better esteemed than that rose, unless in pleasantness of smell it far surpassed the other rose? And so it is in all things as well as in Man. Why should this man be more esteemed than that man, but for his virtue through which every man desireth to be accounted of? Then you amongst men, I do not doubt, but will aspire to follow that virtuous path, to illuster yourself with the ornaments of virtue. And in mine opinion as it beautifieth a fair woman to be decked with pearls and precious stones, so much more it ornifieth a gentleman to be furnished with glittering virtues.

Wherefore, considering the small harm I do to you, the great good I do to others, I prefer mine own intention to discover your volume, before your request to secret same.

This brief extract suffices to show Oxford's literary interests and command, at the age of twenty-two, of Elizabethan prose.

His desire to travel was opposed both by Burghley and the Queen; and there was consternation at Court when Walsingham broke the news that "My Lord of Oxford and Lord Seymour are fled out of England and passed by Bruges to Brussels." The Queen was furious, and sent Bedingsfield to recall the truant, as it was known that Westmorland, who had been attainted for his part in the rebellion of 1569, was

then an exile in Brussels. Within a fortnight Oxford was back in England; and through the good offices of Burghley and Sussex was restored to favour. In the following year, 1575, permission to travel was duly given, and he started for Paris. Valentine Dale, the Ambassador, writes to Burghley:

I presented my Lord of Oxford also to the King and Queen, who used him honourably. Amongst other talk the King asked whether he was married. I said he had a fair lady. "Il y a donc ce," dit il, "un beau couple."

The Earl did not stay in Paris and passed on to Italy, the home of the Renaissance, and the centre of culture and learning. In July he was at Venice and heard with pleasure of the birth of his daughter, and wrote to Burghley, "Your letters have made me a glad man." He toured the length of Italy, and visited Sicily. At Palermo he issued a challenge "Against all manner of persons whatsoever, and at all manner of weapons, as Tournaments, Barriers, with horse and armour, to fight a combat with any whatsoever in defence of his Prince and Country. For which he was very highly commended, and yet no man durst be so hardy to encounter with him."

Although his estates were under the management of the Court of Wards, when he succeeded to the title, he never realised the need of economy,

and became heavily involved in debt. In order to satisfy his creditors he had no option but to urge Burghley to sell his lands. On reaching Paris in 1576, after a tour of sixteen months, he was stunned by the news of a general rumour in Court circles that he was not the father of his daughter Elizabeth, born in July. There appears to be little doubt that the *canard* was the outcome of Catholic intrigue on the part of Lord Henry Howard, aimed at creating a breach between the Protestant Burleigh, Anne Cecil, and Oxford. Eventually a reconciliation was effected, and two more daughters and a son were born, but his proud and sensitive nature never recovered from the shock caused by the scandal.

In 1577 we find the Queen bestowing land worth £250 a year (present value £2,500) on "our faithful cousin, the Earl of Oxford, for good and faithful service," the nature of which is not specified; but it was not the habit of the Queen to give anything without adequate return. In 1579 much was made by the respective partisans of the famous tennis court quarrel between Oxford and Sir Philip Sidney; but the accounts are conflicting, and it is difficult to form a definite opinion. The two were at the time literary rivals; Oxford was the leader of the Euphuists, with Lyly and Munday in support; Sidney, assisted by Spenser and Harvey, was leader of the Romantics. Both leaders had

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travelled and absorbed the spirit of the Renaissance. The rivalry gave scope for such epigrams as the following :

Were I a King I might command content,
Were I obscure unknown should be my cares,
And were I dead no thoughts should me torment,
Nor words, nor wrongs, nor love, nor hate, nor
fears :
A doubtful choice of those things which to crave,
A kingdom, or a cottage, or a grave.

To this Sidney replied :

Wert thou a King yet not command content,
Sith Empire none thy mind could yet suffice,
Wert thou obscure still cares would thee torment,
But wert thou dead all care and sorrow dies.
An easy choice of these things which to crave,
No kingdom nor a cottage, but a grave.

Various books were dedicated to Oxford by his followers, and the atmosphere which prevailed may be appreciated by the following tribute by Munday :

My noble Master, farewell. May your desires, which are dear to us all, prevail. Earnestly do I pray for your welfare and success in the struggle. To the Guardianship of Christ I commit you and yours, till the day when, as Conquerors, we may peacefully resume our delightful literary discussions.

The following extracts attest the Earl of Oxford's literary reputation from 1578 and

onwards. In that year Gabriel Harvey, in an address of welcome to the Earl of Oxford, urges him to give up literature and devote himself to a life of action. The following is a translation of some of the Latin verses in the address:

For a long time Phœbus Apollo has cultivated thy mind in the Arts: British poetical measures have been sung by thee long enough.

O thou hero worthy of renown, throw away the insignificant pen, throw away bloodless books and writings that serve no useful purpose. Now must the sword be brought into play, now is the time for thee to sharpen the spear.

Oxford was then twenty-eight years of age, and had already been a prolific writer. At this time, and indeed up to the time of his death in 1604, hardly more than fifty lines of verse had been acknowledged by him as author. He must have published anonymously from an early period. None but his early efforts had been issued under his name.

In 1586 *A Discourse of English Poetrie* was published by William Webbe, in which the following sentence occurs:

I may not omit the deserved commendations of many honourable and noble Lords and Gentlemen in her Majesty's Court, which in the rare devices of poetry have been and yet are most skilful; among whom the Right Honourable the Earl of Oxford

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may challenge to himself the title of the most excellent among the rest.

In 1589 Lord Lumley in his *Art of English Poetrie*, mentions:

A crew of Courtly makers (Poets), Noblemen, and Gentlemen, who have written excellently well, as it would appear *if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest*, of which number is first that noble Gentleman, the Earl of Oxford.

In 1598, by which time some of the plays by Shakespeare had been published, Francis Meres wrote:

The best for Comedy among us bee Edward Earl of Oxford.

In 1772 Arthur Collins wrote of Oxford:

An excellent poet and comedian whose compositions . . . are lost or worn out.

In 1599 John Farmer, in dedicating the First Set of English Madrigals to Oxford, says: "As a recreation your Lordship have overgone most of them that make it (music) a profession." Oxford was not only a patron of musicians but himself a composer of madrigals and songs.

These extracts show that Oxford was admitted to be an excellent poet and one of the best dramatists of the period. That he wrote anonymously was fully realised by the leading critics.

In 1580 Oxford's literary eminence and good

favour with the Queen led him to be regarded as successor to Leicester as leader at Court; the Fates decreed otherwise. After his return from the Continent, he, for reasons that do not appear, became, together with several friends, including Lord Henry Howard, Charles Arundel, and Frances Southwell, reconciled to the Church of Rome. But, when in due course Oxford realised that this step practically involved allegiance to the King of Spain, coupled with a conspiracy against the Queen, he divulged to the latter all the evidence at his disposal. Howard, Arundel, and Southwell were arrested; and, as countercharges were made against him, Oxford also was sent to the Tower for a short time. Among the charges was the false one of his illegitimacy, and the Earl is quoted as saying, "The Queen sayd he was a bastard for whiche cause he wold never love hir, and wold leave hir in the lurch one daye." Of all the charges it is probable that this one affected him most. Finally, through the mediation of Burghley, he was restored to favour; and the Queen, partly as the result of the information placed at her disposal by Oxford, commenced severe measures against the Catholics, a policy which had long been advised by Burghley and Walsingham.

In 1881 the Earl of Oxford was involved in a scandal connected with Anne Vavasour, one of the Queen's Maids of Honour, and was sent to

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the Tower for a time. The incident led to a duel with her uncle, Sir Thomas Knyvet, in which both were wounded, Oxford seriously.

In 1585 England entered on the Spanish War, which lasted nineteen years, until 1604. Oxford equipped a vessel, *The Edward Bonaventure*, at his own expense, and was engaged in the attack on the Armada. He had previously been offered the command of the naval base at Harwich, but refused it as not being of sufficient importance. At the Thanksgiving Service for the defeat of the Armada, held in St. Paul's in November 1588, Oxford, as Lord Great Chamberlain and senior Earl, and the Earl of Shrewsbury as Earl Marshall, carried the golden canopy, under which the Queen walked in the procession. Earlier in this year the Countess of Oxford died.

Thereafter, for sixteen years, until his death in 1604, the life of the Earl of Oxford is veiled in mystery. He withdrew from Court and went to live at Stoke Newington, conveniently near the theatres in Shoreditch. In 1586 the Queen had made, under a privy seal warrant, a grant of £1,000 a year (about £10,000 present money) to Oxford from the Secret Service Fund, in return for State service. The nature of the service is nowhere stated. The economic and general conditions which prevailed during the Spanish War were in every way as severe as those recently experienced in the years 1914-18. (See two

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articles by Captain B. M. Ward, *Review Anglo-Americaine*, April, 1929, and April, 1930.)

The average expenditure on the Army and Navy from 1586 to 1604 amounted to no less than 72 per cent. of the national income; and Oxford's £1,000 a year can only have been made in return for some unusual service. King James, on his accession in 1603, not only continued the grant, but appointed the Earl a Privy Councillor, and gave him custody of the Forest of Essex and the Keepership of Havering House. It is only possible to hazard a conjecture as to the nature of this service. The Queen was apparently interested, for Oxford writes to Burghley, asking for the redress of "sundry abuses wherein both Her Majesty and myself were in mine office greatly hindered." Taking into consideration Oxford's withdrawal into retirement, his literary reputation and his dramatic predilections, and further, his residence in proximity to the Play-houses, it would seem certain that the services were of a literary nature; possibly, as suggested by Captain Ward, the Earl was charged with the control of a propaganda department for the issue of plays and pamphlets to encourage patriotism and loyalty to the throne during the anxious years of the war. It is undeniable that all the great historical plays, commencing from about 1587—such as *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (attributed to Oxford himself), Marlowe's *Edward*

II, Shakespeare's *King John* and *Henry V*—were published and acted before large and enthusiastic audiences during that period. It is unlikely that Oxford worked alone. In 1590 the pamphleteer, Churchyard, is back in his service, and he probably gathered round him the members of the literary group, which has more than once been associated with Shakespearean publications. These may have included his cousin, Bacon, and his son-in-law, the Earl of Derby, as well as playwrights such as Marlowe (probably from 1586), Lyly (his secretary at one time), Munday, and Greene (previous to 1592). There is evidence that the two Earls, Oxford and Derby, were staying with each other in 1595, 1596, and 1599; both were interested in the drama; both maintained companies of actors. It is significant that during this period, commencing with the publication of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 (the first work bearing the name William Shakespeare), and followed by *Lucrece* in 1594, there issued a steady stream of Shakespearean publications, consisting of the *Sonnets* (1609) and twenty-five plays, of which fifteen were published, ending with *Q. 2 Hamlet* in 1604, the year of Oxford's death, *after which authentic publications ceased until 1623 (The Folio)*.

In 1586 the Earl sat as one of the judges at the trial of the Queen of Scots; and in 1601 he was summoned from retirement to preside as the senior of the twenty-five noblemen, who unani-

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mously found Essex and Southampton guilty. In 1591 he married his second wife, Elizabeth Trentham. Their son Henry was born in 1593, and in 1596 the family moved to King's Place, Hackney, where the Earl died in 1604, on June 24, aged fifty-four.

The following extracts throw some light on the personality of Edward de Vere. In 1607 Chapman wrote in *The Revenge of Bussy*:

I overtook coming from Italy
In Germany a great and famous Earl . . .
He was beside of spirit passing great,
Valiant and learned, and liberal as the sun
Spoke and writ sweetly, or of learned subjects
Or of the discipline of public weal;
And 'twas the Earl of Oxford.

The Earl of Oxford's habit of dressing in a Franco-Italian fashion was caricatured by Gabriel Harvey in 1580:

No words but valorous, no works but womanish only.
For life magnificoes, not a beck but glorious in
show,
In deed most frivolous, not a look but Tuscanish
always.
His cringing side-neck, eyes glancing, fisnamic
smirking,
With forefinger kiss, and brave embrace to the
footward.
Large-bellied kodpeased doublet, unkodpeased half-
hose,

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Straight to the dock like a shirt, and close to the
britch like a diveling.

A little Apish flat couched fast to the pate like an
oyster,

French Camarick ruffs, deep with a whiteness
starched to the purpose.

Everyone A per se A, his terms and braveries in
print,

Delicate in speech, quaint in array; conceited in
all points,

In courtly guiles, a passing singular odd man,

For Gallants a brave mirror, a Primrose of Honour,

A diamond for nonce, a fellow peerless in England.

Not the like discourser for Tongue, and head to be
found out,

Not the like resolute man for great and serious
affairs,

Not the like Lynx to spy out secrets and privities of
States,

Eyed like to Argus, eared like to Midas, nos'd like
to Naso,

Wing'd like to Mercury, fittst of a thousand for to
be employ'd

This, nay more than this, doth practise of Italy in
one year.

None do I name, but some do I know, that a piece
of a twelve month

Hath so perfited outly and inly, both body, both soul,
That none for sense and senses half matchable with
them.

A vulture's smelling, Ape's tasting, sight of an eagle,

A Spider's touching, Hart's hearing, might of a Lion.

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Compounds of wisdom, wit, prowess, bounty,
behaviour,
All gallant virtues, all qualities of body and soul:
O thrice ten hundred thousand times blessed and
happy,
Blessed and happy travail, Travailer most blessed and
happy. . . .

Captain Ward points out that Harvey himself denied that these execrable hexameters had any malicious intent to the Earl, "whose noble Lordship I protest I never meant to dishonour with the least prejudicial word of my tongue or pen, but ever kept a mindful reckoning of many bounden duties towards the same." It has even been suggested—and with reason—that Gabriel Harvey in these hexameters was ridiculing the proposals of Sidney and Spenser to introduce classical metres into English literature. The poem is as much a eulogy as a caricature of the Earl of Oxford. As Oxford took his foolish lampoon in good part, he added, "the noble Earl, not disposed to trouble his jovial mind with such saturnine paltry, still continued like his magnificent self."

In 1587 Andrew Trollop, who had been for many years in the service of Oxford, writes to Lord Burghley:

From the 10th to the 21st year of Her Majesty
[1568 to 1579] I was Deputy to Thomas Gent
esquire; then steward of the manors of the Right

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Honourable the Earl of Oxford, and during all that time being privy, not only of his public dealings but also of his private doings and secret intents, found and knew him endued with special piety, perfect integrity, great care to discharge all trust reposed in him, and no less desire to do good in the commonwealth.¹

Neilson says, in a biographical notice on Christopher Marlowe:

He belonged to a circle of which Sir Walter Raleigh was the centre, and which contained *men like the Earl of Oxford*, and Harriot, the mathematician. These men seem to have engaged in scientific and theological speculation, and were suspected of atheism by the narrower spirits of the time.

The correspondence between Lord Burghley and Oxford does not justify Froude's description of the latter. Although the two men were poles apart in their views and had their differences, there is little trace of this in their correspondence. Burghley set out to treat Oxford as "mine own son," and loyally fulfilled his resolve. In Oxford's many troubles, financial and personal, and on occasions of royal displeasure, he invariably found his father-in-law ready to help or intercede. In 1572 Oxford "desires your Lordship to pardon my youth, but to take in good part my zeal and

¹ *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland.* (Elizabeth), p. 424.

affection towards you"; and, as late as 1590, when Oxford was forty and in retirement, he writes with some pathos, "who in all my causes I find mine honourable good Lord, and to deal more fatherly than friendly with me, the which I do acknowledge—and ever will—myself in special wise bound." Lastly, we find that his epitaph in the Harleian Collection of manuscripts in the British Museum runs: "Of whom I will only speak what all men's voices confirm, he was a man in mind and body absolutely accomplished with honourable endowments."

The Earl of Oxford was temperamental and devoid of appreciation of the value of money. "In matters of thrift inconsiderate," writes the kindly Burghley; but, he hastens to add, "resolute in dutifulness to the Queen and his country." He was always ready to serve as a soldier; and in horsemanship, tournaments, hunting, fencing, he had few equals. His morals were those of the age, and during his first marriage he was unsatisfactory, both as husband and son-in-law. His retirement from Court in 1588, at the age of thirty-eight, after the death of Anne Cecil, was probably due to "conscience awaking bitter memories." Though genuinely fond of his wife he had been unfaithful in conduct, and reckless in belief of the false scandal against her name. He became a recluse, and an altered and repentant man. Mainly owing to the intrigues of the Howard-Arundel party his

political career had been a failure, clouded with disgrace, and loss of what he valued most, "his good name." Like others of literary genius he looked back on the confusions of a wild youth, and on squandered resources; and the fault lay in no small measure with himself. But his remorse was sincere. The puritan Burleigh may have warned him that he had "forgotten God," but his foundations were secure. He was the dramatist and poet from early days and onwards; and, whether interviewing Sturmius at Strasburg, or assimilating the spirit of the Italian Renaissance, he was always acquiring knowledge. The man who wrote to his friend Bedingfield at the age of twenty-two, as follows, was not likely in the long run to "sink in the scale":

"When all things forsake us, virtue will ever abide with us; and when our bodies fall into the bowels of the earth, yet that shall mount with our minds into the highest heavens." He sought refuge in literature during his remaining years; and it was ten years after his retirement that Francis Meres paid tribute to him as the best living writer of comedy. The tragedies had not yet then appeared. He surely left the fire, the ashes; and what survived was gold.

Doctor Grosart, commenting on the beauty and promise of his early verses, wrote in 1872: "An unlifted shadow lies across his memory."

If the poet were the great unknown, and his

identity had to be discovered from his works, there would be general agreement :

1. That he was an aristocrat, or familiar with Court life. His Lords and Ladies move to the manner born.

2. That he was cultured, a scholar, and had been trained in law.

3. That he was fluent in French and Italian, and was acquainted with Northern Italy.

Edward de Vere stands before us equipped with these qualifications. He was a scholar, dramatist and poet of a high order. He had studied the law; had visited foreign Courts; was acquainted with French and Italian; had spent nearly a year in Italy, the scene of six Shakespearean plays. He was a patron of literature and the stage, and had maintained his own company of players. Whether he was endowed with the genius of "Shakespeare" must depend on the evidence of his identity with the latter, set forth in these pages. But there is no room for doubt, who on available evidence would seem to be the better qualified; Edward de Vere, or Shakspeare of Stratford, whose early life is vague, whose education and culture have to be presumed from the works, whose signatures are "illiterate scrawls," and who was acquainted with no language or country other than his own.

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CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF
EDWARD DE VERE, THE SEVENTEENTH EARL
OF OXFORD

Born on 12 April, 1550, at Castle Hedingham in Essex.

November, 1558. Matriculated as "impubes" fellow commoner, Queen's College, Cambridge.

3 August, 1562. Succeeded to the Earldom on death of his father. Became Royal Ward in charge of Sir William Cecil (afterwards Lord Burleigh).

10 August, 1564. Received the Hon. M.A. degree at Cambridge.

6 September, 1566. Created Master of Arts at Oxford.

1567. Admitted to Gray's Inn.

1570. On active service with Lord Sussex in Scotland.

1571. Won a prize at two tournaments.

19 December, 1571. Married Lady Anne Cecil, daughter of Lord Burleigh, in Westminster Abbey, the Queen being present.

5 January, 1571. Contributed Latin Preface to *The Courtier* by Castiglione; translated by Bartholomew Clarke.

1573. Published Bedingfield's translation of *Car-*

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danus' Comfort, and wrote his famous letter to Bedingfield.

Edited *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*.

7 January, 1575. Started on his foreign tour. Visited France, Germany, Italy. Issued a challenge to all-comers at Palermo.

2 July. Birth of his eldest daughter Elizabeth (afterwards Countess of Derby).

4 April, 1576. Heard on his return to Paris of scandal regarding parentage of his daughter, which led to estrangement and crisis in his life.

1576. Published poems in *The Paradyse of Dainty Devises*, on "the loss of his Good Name."

Secretly reconciled to the Roman Catholic Church.

July, 1578. Received complimentary verses from Gabriel Harvey, urging him to give up literature and embark on active service.

1579. Tennis Court quarrel with Sidney.

Leader of the Euphuist Movement.

1580. Took over Warwick's company of Actors.

Renounced his profession of Catholicism and denounced Howard and Arundel to the Queen.

2 January, 1581. Won a prize at a Tournament.

Countercharges brought against him by Howard and Arundel. Spent a night in the Tower, June 1581.

March, 1582. Fought a duel with Knyvet.

Lessee of the Blackfriars' Theatre.

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1585. Sent to the Low Countries as Commander of the Horse, but recalled six weeks later. Birth of his daughter Bridget, April 6, 1584 (afterwards Countess of Berkshire).
1586. His poetry praised by William Webbe.
26 June. Granted by the Queen under a privy seal warrant a special annuity of £1,000 a year (present value £10,000).
27 September. Was a Commissioner at the trial of Mary, Queen of Scots.
- 26 May, 1587. Birth of his daughter Susan (afterwards Countess of Montgomery).
12 September. Death of his daughter Frances.
- 5 June, 1588. Death of the Countess of Oxford. Fitted out and captained a ship against the Armada.
24 November. Bore the canopy over the Queen at Thanksgiving Service in St. Paul's.
- 1588-89. Retired into seclusion.
1589. His poems and comedies praised by Lord Lumley. Identified as the Gentle Spirit in the *Tears of the Muses*, Spenser.
1591. Married Elizabeth Trentham; settled at Stoke Newington.
- 24 February, 1593. His son Henry was born.
- 26 January, 1595. His daughter Elizabeth married to the Earl of Derby, the Queen being present.
1596. Moved to King's Place, Hackney.

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1598. Francis Meres recorded that the best writer of comedies is the Earl of Oxford.

April, 1603. One of the Lords who bore the canopy at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth. Attended Coronation of King James, who continued his annuity of £1,000 a year; made him Privy Councillor; gave reversion of his custody of the Forest of Essex to his cousins, Francis and Horatio de Vere.

24 June, 1604. His death; buried at Hackney.

The widowed Countess dying in 1612, desired to be buried as "near to the body of my late dear and noble husband as may be."

THE "WELBECK" AND "ASHBOURNE" PORTRAITS

Such then is the brief outline of the life of Edward de Vere, and it remains to consider, in the light of available evidence, what manner of man was this highly gifted poet, dramatist, and eccentric Earl. At the beginning of the book there are photographs of two portraits. In the "Welbeck" the Earl is shown at the age of twenty-five about to start on the tour of travel which was destined to change both his character and life. In the "Ashbourne" he stands before us matured in age, a recluse, immersed in literature, with his tragic life-history behind him. Such a personality as one might expect of the man who wrote under the name of Shakespeare.

The "Welbeck" portrait was painted by a Flemish artist in Paris in 1575, was mentioned in a letter from the Ambassador Valentine Dale to Burleigh, and was sent as a present to the Countess of Oxford. The "Ashbourne" portrait, thus named owing to its discovery at Ashbourne, Derbyshire, bears two dates, the upper *Ætatis suae* 47, the lower in larger figures, *A.D.* 1611, indicating either the year of his age, or the date of painting. The "Ashbourne" was described by Mr. W. W. Spielman in the *Connoisseur* for April-May 1910; and he, thinking, perhaps hoping, that it may be genuine, wrote as follows:

We have thus the presentment of a handsome, courtly gentleman, well formed and of good bearing, and apparently of good breeding, thoughtful and contemplative, so sincere in expression and presentation that the picture cannot be regarded in any sense as a theatrical portrait.

In fact, therefore, this would seem to be the portrait of a nobleman of the Elizabethan Court.

Father de Vere Beauclerk, S.J., first pointed out the resemblance between the two portraits; and, allowing for the difference in age, twenty-two years, and for the handiwork of two different artists, there can be no doubt that the "Welbeck" and the "Ashbourne" represent the same man. Father Beauclerk finds that they can be super-

imposed, the one above the other, with accuracy; and an important feature is the outward cast in the respective right eyes. The Earl of Oxford, therefore, at the age of forty-seven (1597) stood for the portrait reputed to be "Shakespeare." Father Beauclerk holds that the "Ashbourne" was the original portrait, of which others are variants; as is probable, seeing that the first work published under the name Shakespeare appeared in 1593. Chambers considers that "none of the innumerable portraits that pass as Shakespeare's carry any degree of authenticity"; and Father Beauclerk has made a chart which establishes that many are based on the "Ashbourne." It would seem that the upper figures, indicating the age as forty-seven, were inscribed when the picture was painted; and that the date 1611, in larger figures, was subsequently added. If this date refers to the age of the poet, it would be a needless addition, and in the case of the Earl of Oxford inaccurate, whereas it cannot represent the date of the picture, since Oxford died in 1604. Shakspeare of Stratford reached the age of forty-seven in 1611, and this date was added, possibly in 1623 (*Folio*), in order to lead the public to suppose that the picture represented the Stratford man and thus maintain the anonymity of Oxford. Mr. Allen (p. 326) proves that Chapman must have seen the "Ashbourne," and quotes from the *Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, II, i:

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As these high men do, low in all true grace,
Their height being privilege to all things base,
And as the foolish poet that still writ
All his most self-loved verse in paper royal,
Of parchment ruled with lead, smoothed with
pumice,
Bound richly up, and strung with crimson strings,
Never so blest as when he writ and read
The ape-loved issue of his brain, and never
But joying in himself, admiring ever
Yet in his works behold him, and he show'd
Like to a ditcher.

Spielman in his description writes :

Upon the left thumb, a member of unusual length, is a gold signet ring; and held in the right hand a gold embroidered book with broad red silk ribbons. . . . This book might be, from its style and luxurious binding, a missal or similar devotional volume, save for what is claimed for a mark and cross-spears appearing on it.

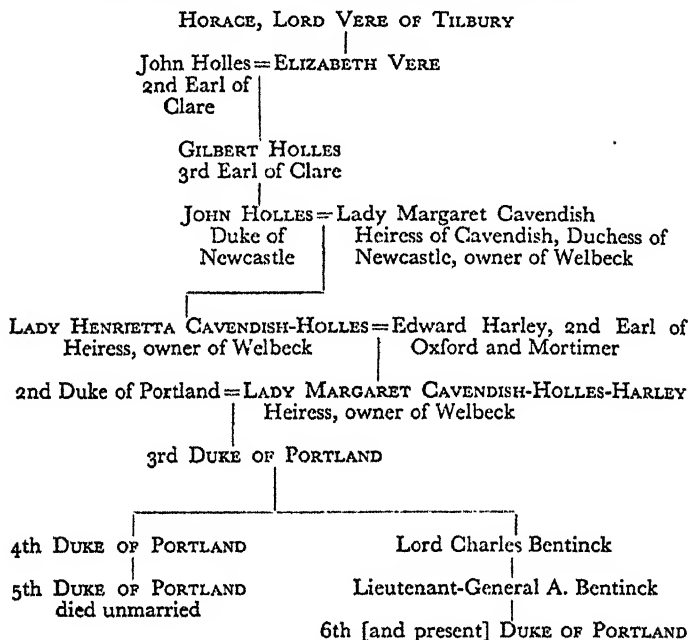
“High men” implies man of high birth; the “paper royal of parchment” compares with Spielman’s description. The “ape-loved issue” suggest verses loved by the apes, the actors; and finally, we have the allusions to the “red silk tie ribbons,” and “strung with crimson strings.” It is practically certain that Chapman saw the “Ashbourne” portrait of Shakespeare, and recognised the Earl of Oxford as the poet.

The following succession of ownership of the

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“Welbeck” portrait commences with Lord Horace de Vere, the Horatio of *Hamlet*:

OWNERSHIP OF THE WELBECK PORTRAIT



By courtesy

THE LIBRARIAN, WELBECK.

CHAPTER III

THE EVIDENCE OF THE POEMS

THE movement of the Renaissance, which comprised a new impulse in literature, as well as an enthusiasm for freedom of thought and speech, affected countries differently. In England it mainly confined itself to literature and scholarship. Commencing in the reign of Henry VIII, who in his early days posed as a "humanist sovereign," it reached its zenith in the reign of the great Tudor Queen, and the Elizabethan era came to be recognised as the golden age of English literature. The movement derived great encouragement from the enthusiasm and scholarship of the Queen herself, who could converse in Latin, and to some extent in Greek. That plays and masks were popular at Court was enough in this great and responsive age, and the demand was met. Many of the nobles, including the Earl of Oxford, and his father before him, maintained companies of actors, and were themselves authors, though anonymously. Authors were apt, moreover, to work collectively, two or three of them hurrying out a play in collaboration. *It was an unwritten law that plays or poems by courtiers*

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should not be printed under their names while they were alive.

The period of the Tudors was not only a time of severe repression and of harsh government, but also a time when free speech was impossible. Able men could only dissemble and speak in allegory. The plays of Shakespeare and of other writers are doubtless a reflection of the period; the names but a disguise—the playwrights merely the spokesmen of those who would have been sent to the Tower and the Block if they had expressed their opinions openly. —Petherick in Johnson's *Rise of English Culture*.

The prolific output and contemporary reputation of the Earl of Oxford was referred to in the preceding chapter; and there is evidence to show that, writing under the pseudonym "William Shakespeare, or Shake-speare", he was the author of the plays and poems generally attributed to Shakspeare of Stratford.

The first appearance of Shakspeare in London, after his departure from Stratford in 1586-87 (Masson), is based on an utterance by Greene in his *Groatsworth of Wit* (Stationer's Hall, 1592). Greene, addressing three "playmakers" (believed to be Marlowe, Peele, Nash), warns them against the players, "those puppets that speake from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colours. Yes, trust them not, for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his 'Tyger's

heart wrapped in a Player's hide' supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country." The phrase "*Tyger's heart*," etc., is taken from 3 *Henry VI*, supposed to have been written in part by Shakespeare, and it was concluded that Greene was referring to Shakspeare, and that in 1592 he was both an actor and an author. Looney, however, gives good reasons for holding that 3 *Henry VI* was by Oxford.

It would seem curious that an experienced playwright such as Greene should express concern about a young man of twenty-eight, who had only collaborated in a play that year. But Greenwood and others are sceptical as to the identity of "Shake-scene" with "Shakspeare"; since "Shake" occurs frequently in the slang expressions of the time, such as "Shake-rags," "Shake-bag"; while the anonymous *Henry VI* is a doubtful Shakespearean play, and was not included by Francis Meres in his list of plays by Shakespeare written before 1598.

Dr. Rendall considers the identification far from certain, and that the terms used are more applicable to an aristocrat than to a young and unfledged actor.

Mr. Allen finds a reference to Edward de Vere. Greene urges that a fellow playwright (according

to Holland, *Nash*) "has a libertie to reprove all and name none, for one being spoken to, all are offended; none being blamed, no man is injured. Stop *shallow water still running*, it will rage; or tread on a *worme* and it will turne; then blame not Schollers vexed with sharpe lines, if they reprove too much thy liberty of reproofe."

"Shallow water running" may be a ford for oxen, or an Ox-ford, and "Ver" is a worm. Mr. Allen invited a reviewer, sceptical of this allusion, to visit the church at Long Melford (Suffolk), where there is a stained-glass window to the de Veres, in which is shown an Ox crossing a ford. In *Much Ado about Nothing* Benedict (Oxford) says: "Most expedient for the Wise if *Don Worm* his conscience find no impediment to the contrary." Professor Slater says (p. 86): "The phrase 'an upstart crow beautified with our feathers' may mean no more than that the actor to whom they were applied got the applause which the dramatist who wrote his lines really deserved, and 'bombast out a blank verse' declaim the lines given him with loud voice and superfluous gestures. The whole passage, however, is generally taken to imply that Greene believed Shakespeare the actor to be the author of plays compiled out of other men's productions. . . ."

Chettle the publisher expressed his regrets to one of the dramatists that he had not modified what Greene wrote, and added: "Because divers

of worship have reported his uprightness in dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his wit."

Says Slater: "It has been said that this apology was made to Shakespere; *although Chettle expressly states* that it was to one of the three authors, Marlowe, Peele, and Lodge, to whom Greene had addressed his warning." It was, as Fleay pointed out, no doubt to Marlowe to whom Chettle apologised; and we may add, that the "divers of worship" probably included Marlowe's friends, Raleigh and Walsingham.

It is safer to accept that the first work produced by Shakespeare was *Venus and Adonis* (published 1593), dedicated to the Earl of Southampton as "the first heire of mine invention." In order to support the theory that Shakspere of Stratford commenced to write in 1592 or even 1591, it has to be explained that by "first heire" he meant, not his first composition, but his *first publication* (Chambers). Incidentally neither Mrs. Stopes (*Life of Southampton*) nor Captain Ward could find any evidence of friendship between the Earl and Shakspere.

The alternative view is that the poem was written by Oxford in collaboration with Bacon, and dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, then engaged to his daughter Elizabeth; and that the words "the first heire of mine invention" implied his first work under the invented pseudonym of Shakespeare or Shake-speare.

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Lucrece was published the following year and also dedicated to Southampton. The dedications to both poems are in elaborate and imaginative language. With reference to the claims of Shakspeare of Stratford as author, Dr. Rendall writes:

. . . but the dedication (that of *Lucrece*) addressed by a prentice player to the Earl of Southampton, without even a word of respect, becomes a rank impertinence which would have stopped all further intercourse.

Greenwood in *Is There a Shakespeare Problem?* wrote convincingly on the subject.

We start therefore with the proposition that the "Shakespeare" of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594) was not William Shakespeare of Stratford.

He also wrote (p. 344) that the two poems *Venus* and *Lucrece* were the only works ever published by "Shakespeare" himself; and further, that the earliest known allusion to "Shakespeare" by name refers to *Lucrece*, the second of these poems.

And Shake-speare paints poor Lucrece rape.

(Verses prefixed to *Willobie his Avisa*, 1594.)

The earliest allusion to the poet's name presents it in the hyphenated form "Shake-speare," which we may say with certainty, Shakspeare of Stratford never himself made use of. Was the reference to player Shakspeare, or to the poet, whoever he was,

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that wrote under the name of "Shakespeare" or "Shake-speare"?

Admiral Holland (p. 88) points out one very possible reason for the adoption of the pseudonym Shake-speare. The Earl of Oxford was also Viscount Bolebec, and the Bolebec crest is a lion holding or shaking a broken spear. Mr. Looney explains that he was first attracted to the Oxford hypothesis when reading an early poem by him on *Women*. He examined an anthology of sixteenth-century poetry, marking off each piece identical in stanza with that of *Venus and Adonis*, and finally found one, whose distinctive qualities were in harmony with that poem.

This six-line stanza is made use of in seven of Oxford's poems; and in six of the Shakespearean plays. (Golden Treasury—Palgrave).

Women

If women could be fair and yet not fond,
Or that their love were firm not fickle, still,
I would not marvel that they make men bond,
By service long to purchase their good will,
But when I see how frail those creatures are,
I muse that men forget themselves so far.
To mark the choice they make, and how they change,
How oft from Phoebus do they flee to Pan,
Unsettled still like haggards wild they range,
These gentle birds that fly from man to man,
Who would not scorn and shake them from the fist
And let them fly, fair fools, which way they list?

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Yet for disport we fawn and flatter both,
To pass the time when nothing else can please,
And train them to our lure with subtle oath,
Till, weary of their wiles, ourselves we ease;
And then we say, when we their fancy try,
To play with fools, Oh what a fool was I.

Similarly in the poet's description of the beauty of Lucrece the theme is dominated between contrasts "white" and "red," as in Oxford's charming poem, *What Cunning Can Express*:

The Lily in the field
That glories in his white,
For pureness now must yield
And render up his right:
Heaven pictured in her face
Doth promise joy and grace.

Fair Cynthia's silver light,
That beats on running streams,
Compares not with her white,
Whose hairs are all sun-beams.
So bright my nymph doth shine
As day unto my eyne.

With this there is a red
Exceeds the Damaske-Rose
Which in her cheeks is spread,
Whence every favour grows.
In sky there is no star
But she surmounts it far.

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When Phœbus from his bed
Of Thetis doth arise,
The morning blushing red
In fair carnation wise,
He shows in my Nymph's face
As Queen of every grace.

This pleasant Lily white
This taint of roseate red
This Cynthia's silver light
This sweet fair Dea spread;
These sunbeams in mine eye,
These beauties make me die.

He also compares the following :

The Rejected Lover

By de Vere

And let her feel the power of all your might,
And let her have her most desire with speed,
And let her pine away both day and night,
And let her moan and none lament her need,
And let all those that shall her see
Despise her state and pity me.

Lucrece. Stanza 141

Let him have time to tear his curled hair,
Let him have time against himself to rave,
Let him have time of Time's help to despair,
Let him have time to live a loathed slave,
Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave,
And time to see one that by alms doth live
Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.

Mr. Allen finds many parallels, and lays stress on the continuous reference in *Venus* to the Boar-motif, the Oxford crest, taken from Golding's *Metamorphoses*. The poem *Venus* has been thus described "as polished, elegant and sumptuous a piece of rhetoric as English letters have ever produced"; whereas *Lucrece* is derived from the *Fasti* of Ovid, of which at that time there appears to have been no English version. Both poems show traces of reference to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as translated by Arthur Golding, Oxford's uncle and tutor. The composition of neither poem would have been inconsistent with the Earl's standing as scholar and lyric poet. As regard Shakspeare of Stratford, Dr. Rendall writes (p. 90):

Another course has been to build fairy fabrics on things that "may have been"; on Shakspeare's schooling at Stratford, on his training as a page, on his residence in London—or even at Oxford, or on the Continent—on his intimacy with the great, or on the miraculous gifts of "genius." "These are such stuff as dreams are made on." They throw interesting sidelights on the conditions of the time, but have no links with facts, except that they must be pre-supposed in order to account for "Shakespeare." The poor scraps of authentic record are enough to discredit the imaginary. Miracles do not happen. *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, *Lucrece* in 1594, have to be accounted for. No miracle of genius can make the *Metamorphoses*

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familiar, or re-incarnate "the sweet wittie soul of Ovid"; none can instil familiarity with French and Italian speech or literature; none can inoculate with the birthright and accent of nobility. And these are inherent not only in the Plays and Sonnets, but from the outset in "the first heir of his invention."

We are to suppose that Shakspeare, in 1592, aged twenty-eight, wrote the polished, classical poem, *Venus*; obtained a licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury; and dedicated the poem to his "friend and Patron" the Earl of Southampton. The Court and the literary world would certainly have heard of this rising poet. Yet, such prominent men as Hall, Bishop of Norwich, and the Rev. J. Marston, in 1597-98, when at least twelve Shakespearean plays had appeared, identified the name as a pseudonym and implied that "Labeo," a Roman lawyer, in reality Bacon, was the part author of *Venus*.

Better write, or, Labeo, write alone.

The fifteenth stanza of *Lucrece* is as follows:

But she, that never cop'd with stranger eyes,
Could pick no meaning from their parling looks,
Nor read the subtle-shining secrecies
Writ in the glossy margents of such books;
She touch'd no unknown baits, nor feared no hooks,
Nor could she moralize his wanton sight,
More than his eyes were open'd to the light.

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Bacon's habit of marginally noting is suggested in line four; while "Sh" begins line 103, the numerical value of Shakespeare. The initial letters B. C. N., W. S., N. M., supply BaCoN, W. Sh., Na Me.

One need not be a Baconian to trace the hand of Bacon here. Had Shakspere been the author of these poems it is certain that the Bishop of Norwich and Marston would have recognised him as the poet, and not have implied that the name was a pseudonym. It is probable that Bacon and Oxford wrote in collaboration.

Moreover, the inscription in Stratford Church is:—

Judicio Pylum, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus maeret, Olympus habet.

Otherwise, that Shakespeare was England's wisest statesman, greatest philosopher and a poet comparable to Vergil. The original bust resembled Bacon. It is clear that there was contemporary opinion in support of Bacon as author or part author of the works of Shakespeare.

CHAPTER IV

THE EVIDENCE OF THE PLAYS

I

FRANCIS MERES AND THE EARL OF OXFORD

FRANCIS MERES, in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, gives a list of twelve plays which had already been written by "Shakespeare," namely, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Love's Labour's Wonne* (probably *All's Well that Ends Well*), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*. He makes no mention of *Henry VI*, nor of *Hamlet*, dated 1583 (Holland). The list is not exhaustive, because Dr. Hotson ("Shakespeare versus Shallow") has shown that *Twelfth Night* and *Merry Wives* were almost certainly acted in 1596 and 1597 respectively.

Among the best for tragedy he mentions, with others, Shakespeare, though the great tragedies had not appeared. Finally "*the best for comedy amongst us bee Edward Earle of Oxford*," and further on he adds—Lyly, Lodge, Gascoyne, Greene, Shake-

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spere and others. This reference to Oxford was made ten years after his retirement in 1588, and only six years before his death, a period during which he was known to be devoting himself to literature.

Meres credits Shakspeare therefore with the production, between 1593-98, of two long classical poems, most of the *Sonnets*, and at least twelve plays; this during a strenuous business life, varied with occasional appearances on the stage.

Although *Venus* and *Lucrece* had been published under the name Shakespeare, the plays had appeared anonymously until 1598, when *Love's Labour's Lost*, by W. Shakspeare, and *Richard II*, by William Shake-speare, were published. Meres credited Shakespeare with the remaining ten plays.

Says Sir George Greenwood :

These eleven, twelve, or more dramas must have been composed by Shakspeare and brought on the stage, if not published, between 1593-98. If Mr. Robertson can believe this, he has indeed great faith, reserved for the Stratfordian Gospel only. *Credat Judæus non Ego*.

Was Meres referring to Shakspeare of Stratford, or to an author?

Says Dr. Rendall :

Meres' list of authors seems not much more than a scissors-and-paste inventory, combining notices and intimations derived from other hands . . . but it is obvious that in Meres' catalogue, "Shakespeare"

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takes his place, as an author only, not as an individual; and this is, I think, confirmed, not contradicted by his reference to "the sweete wittie soul of Ovid in mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare, witnes his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred *Sonnets* among his private friends, etc." In connection with "the sugred sonnets to private friends," it has not, I think, been noticed that F. Meres was brother-in-law to John Florio. For years, probably from 1588 onwards, Florio "lived in the pay and patronage" of the Earl of Southampton: in 1594 he was an inmate of the Earl's Titchfield household: and there was no "private friend" more likely to enjoy the privilege of confidential perusal of the *Sonnets*.

The Earl of Oxford's pseudonym of Shakespeare must have been well known to the leaders of the literary world of the time, and to such men as Chapman, Munday, Lyly, and Ben Jonson. They would have recognised without fail the numerous personal allusions to himself, which are woven into the text of the Plays and Sonnets.

2

THE PLAYWRIGHT LYLY AND THE EARL OF OXFORD

Mr. Looney submits another link in the chain of evidence, in Oxford's connection with the playwright Lyly. Sir S. Lee noticed that Shakespeare was indebted to only two of his fellow

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dramatists, Lyly and Marlowe, the former during the earlier period of his career; but doubted the authorship of certain lyrics in Lyly's dramas owing to their *superiority*. Mr. R. Warwick Bond holds that the lyrics were by Lyly, but finds that in comedy Lyly is Shakespeare's only model; and that Lyly's influence is of a more permanent nature than that of any other dramatist.

There is no evidence of friendship or association between Lyly and Shakspeare of Stratford; but the above authorities agree in recognising the relationship between the plays of Lyly and those of "Shakespeare" the poet. What are the facts?

Lyly was Oxford's private secretary from 1580 to 1587, if not to 1591, and manager of the Earl's company of "Oxford Boys"; Lyly received his dramatic impulse and education from Oxford. The author of the *Arte of English Poesie*, writing in 1589, classes Oxford with Edwards as deserving the highest praise for comedy and interlude . . . (then follows particulars respecting the activities of "Oxford's Boys") . . . "*Suggestion*, encouragement and *apparatus* thus lay ready to Lyly's hand."

Mr. Looney analyses Lyly's lyrics in the light of parallels with Oxford poems, finding that they were written by the latter. Captain Ward establishes that all Lyly's plays were written while he was in the employment of the Earl of Oxford; that the Quartos of the plays were issued

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anonymously, and not under the name of Lyly, from which the inference is drawn that they were the result of collaboration between Lyly and the Earl. It follows, therefore, that this *resemblance between the comedies of Shakespeare and those of Lyly*, noticed by Lee, can only be due to the latter's *collaboration with the Earl of Oxford*. The Lyrics were beyond Lyly's capacity, and were not included in the Comedies until 1632, after the death of both Lyly and the Earl of Oxford.

Dr. Rendall writes :

The legitimate . . . inference is that Lyly was indebted for them (songs and musical interludes) to his patron-director, Edward de Vere; and they are brought into close and formal contact with Shakespeare when we find a variant of the pixies' song in *Endymion*,

"Pinch him, pinch him, black and blue,"

actually utilised in the *Merry Wives*, and printed in the imperfect draft of 1602.

3

THE GROUP

Whether Shakspeare or the Earl of Oxford was the author of the plays, it is certain that they were not the work of one man. There is ample evidence of collaboration. Says Chambers (1899):

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Collaboration, rarely found in other forms of contemporary literature, was very common in the drama.

Again, referring to the players Heminges and Condell, and the selection for the Folio :

It is quite possible that they saw no harm in including without comment a play which Shakespeare had only revised, one or two for which he had a collaborator, and one to which he had contributed little, but which had long been linked to other "parts" of an historical drama (i, 207).

It is admitted that much of the work published in the Folio of 1623 is not by Shakespeare. Many poems and plays also were published from time to time in the name of Shakespeare which he had not written. Said Dr. Garnett :

It may surprise some of my hearers to be told that so considerable a part of the work which passes under Shakespeare's name is probably not from his hand.

Greenwood considers that the plays included in the First Folio were the work "of many pens and one Master Mind." Further, the vocabulary of Shakespeare has been estimated at 15,000 words (Max Müller), 21,000 (Craik), in comparison with Milton at 8,000. The subject is controversial, but it may be accepted that the vocabulary is not of one man but of several.

Greenwood (p. 453) writes as regards the authenticity of the plays in the Folio :

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The balance of authority is strongly against *Titus Andronicus*; it is difficult to find anything Shakespearean in the first part of *Henry VI*; it is very doubtful if *The Taming of the Shrew* is by Shakespeare, and at any rate a large portion of it is generally admitted not to be his; there is much doubt about the second and third parts of *Henry VI*; the work of two hands has been seen in *Troilus and Cressida*, and it may be permitted to doubt whether that curious play is Shakespearean at all; a large part of *Henry VIII*, including some of the finest passages, is generally assigned to Fletcher. *Timon of Athens* is certainly not wholly Shakespearean; two hands have been found in *Macbeth*, and so on.

Chambers (i. 234-5) admits collaboration in *Henry VIII* and probably in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Pericles*, and *Two Noble Kinsmen*. There may be touching up of *Titus Andronicus* and of certain other plays, but "the great majority of the plays are Shakespeare's from beginning to end, and that, broadly speaking, when he had once written them, he left them alone, I feel little doubt. These are propositions which, so far, disintegrating criticism has entirely failed to shake."

Yet another view: Mr. Robertson finds "disparate styles in the plays," which leads him to seek clues to other dramatists, with the result that he transfers "the primary responsibility for *Richard III*, *Richard II*, *Henry V*, *Julius Cæsar* and *Comedy of Errors* to Marlowe; for *Romeo and*

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Juliet to Peele; for *Two Gentlemen of Verona* to Greene; for *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* to Chapman. There has been much collaboration between some of these and possibly with Kyd and others. Shakespeare has rehandled all these, some more, some less, 'with a view,' first and last to making them serve the Company's ends. Of the plays as a whole, the great majority are simply not of Shakespeare's drafting." "Here," says Chambers (p. 219), "of course common sense revolts. . . . Something must be wrong with the methods which have led to such devastating conclusions."

This considerable output, which did not, and could not, have emanated from the "Master mind"—apart from work deliberately and falsely ascribed to Shakespeare—can be accounted for by the existence of the Group, members of which collaborated, and who revised or completed unfinished plays, after Oxford's death in 1604, possibly under the direction of Bacon and the Earl of Derby. On the other hand, the fact that the plays were issued under the pseudonym William Shakespeare—or Shake-speare—made it difficult for the author, or even anyone acting for him, to take action against piratical offenders.

For instance the play *Love's Labour's Lost* was produced in 1598 as "Newly augmented and corrected" by "W. Shakespere." The distinguished French critic, Professor Abel Lefranc,

is convinced that Lord Derby was mainly responsible for the play. But Derby's share was probably confined to the revision of 1596; because Chambers admits that the play refers to events in France in 1578, and Clark assigns the play to Oxford in that year, when the matter was topical.

Professor Lefranc found record that in 1599 "our Earle of Darby is busye in penning comedyes for the commoun players," and proved that, in addition to *Love's Labour's Lost*, Derby was intimately connected with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was almost certainly acted at his wedding to Elizabeth de Vere in 1595.

Lefranc also gives him *The Tempest*, because Derby was intimately acquainted with Dr. Dee, Queen Elizabeth's famous astrologer, and the play is full of magic, astrology and occultism. But it is more likely to have been the work of Raleigh and his friend Lady Pembroke, as considered later. But Oxford no doubt collaborated with his son-in-law Derby in the revisions of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Moreover, Southern wrote of Oxford in the dedication of *Pandora*:

For who marketh better than he
The seven turning flames of the sky? (The Planets)
Or hath read more of the antique:
Hath greater knowledge of the tongues?
Or understandeth sooner the sounds
Of the learner to love music?

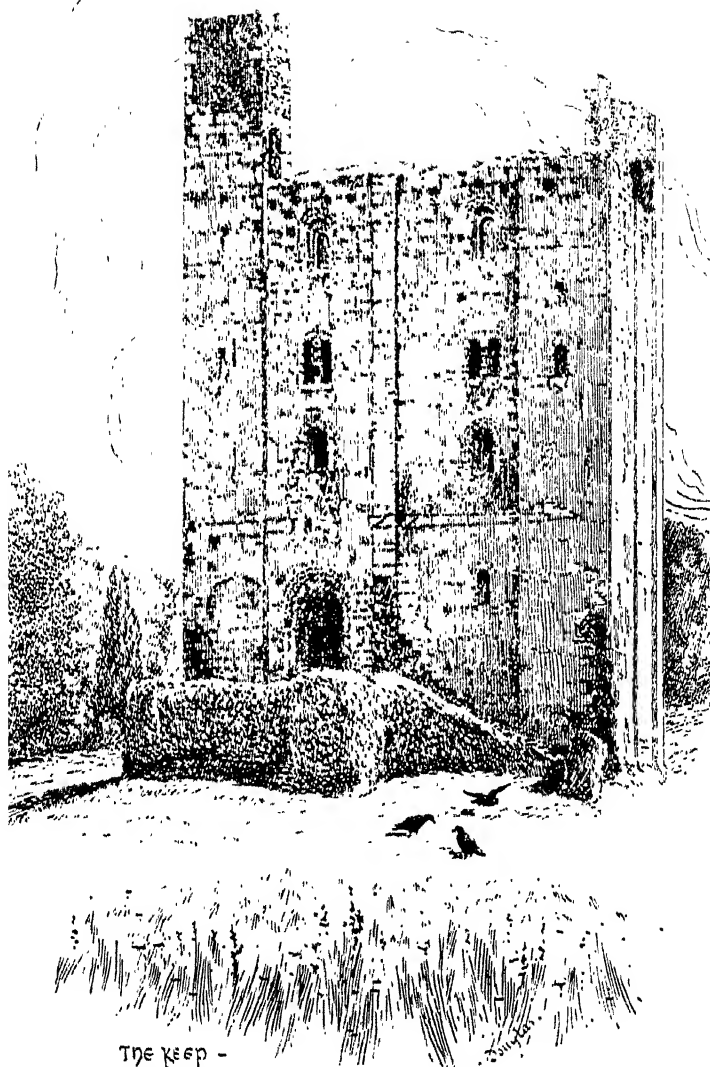
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Hence the astronomical allusions found by Admiral Holland in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*.

It is probable that Oxford collaborated with his son-in-law Derby in these two plays (and with his cousin Bacon in *Richard II* and *Richard III*). Slater, referring to the Northumberland MS. (p. 125), thinks it probable "that Bacon was the principal author of *Richard II* and *Richard III*, and that he therefore should be regarded as one of the 'Group' representing 'Shakespeare.'"

Says Greenwood (regarding the N. MS.): "It is quite reasonable to believe that among the contents of the volume were the two plays, *Richard II* and *Richard III* . . . noted as having been transcribed or for future transcription . . . not probably after 1597 when the plays were first among many published."

Further, in regard to many of the plays, Slater holds that Oxford was the principal member of a group of collaborators; that he began as an amateur actor, playwright and manager; ("in 1573," Holland); that in the second stage he continued as agent of the State (then receiving a grant of £1,000 a year from the Secret Service Fund); finally he threw more of his personality into the plays, revising them as literature during the latter days of his withdrawal from public life. Captain Ward's opinion is that in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties he employed Lyly, Marlowe,



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CASTLE HEDDINGHAM.

Peele and Greene in war propaganda, remunerated perhaps from the State grant. Thereafter, he collaborated with personal friends and relations, such as Derby, Bacon and Lady Pembroke.

Finally, after Oxford's death, "bold and skilful imitators," such as Wilkins, Chapman and Fletcher, met the public demand for more "Shakespeare" plays by writing such spurious plays as *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Henry VIII*, etc.

With reference to the work published during Shakspeare's lifetime which manifestly was not his, Greenwood comments on the absence of protest by him, if he is to be regarded as the author, a situation "unique in the history of literature." He suggests that "Shakespeare thus became a *nom de plume* or pseudonym in this sense, that it was found a mighty convenient name . . . likely to sell." "If anyone, however, had ventured to 'put upon the public' a work of his own, bearing the name of 'Ben Jonson,' it is not to be doubted that Ben would have intervened." The silence of William of Stratford can only be explained by the fact that he was not the author. The absence of other protest was due to the adoption by the poet of a pseudonym and concealment of identity.

Admiral Holland in *Shakespeare, Oxford and Elizabethan Times*, a work distinguished by great knowledge and research, submits that there were two dramatists. One was the Earl of Oxford, who

commenced with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1573 as a writer and amateur actor, and in 1585 adopted independently the pseudonym of "Will Shakespeare." He wrote twenty-five of the plays attributed to "Shakespeare," nineteen unaided, and the rest perhaps in collaboration with the Earl of Derby. The other was Shakspere of Stratford, a contemporary dramatist of conspicuous ability, who started revising old plays in 1590, and wrote twenty-five plays in all. [The majority of these were rejected by the selectors of the First Folio, and appeared, some anonymously, others under the name of Shakespeare, or the initials "W. S."] Admiral Holland has shown that the plays are full of contemporary references and he supplied valuable evidence for antedating the majority of them.

Professor Gilbert Slater admits that his interest in the Shakespearean problem was "created suddenly and accidentally." He covers the entire ground in his scholarly and attractive book *Seven Shakespeares*, and writes his conclusions (p. 205): "If I could, I would now present the case against this theory, but I cannot. To the best of my knowledge, no reply to the Oxfordians has been published. Nor can I make out any substantial adverse case myself." He found himself once arguing in favour of Butler's thesis with regard to the *Odyssey* in the company of certain Academic professors of English. With one voice they pro-

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tested that there was more evidence of feminine authorship in Shakespeare than in Homer. He replied, incautiously, "Yes, but you don't know who Shakespeare was." The discussion ceased abruptly; a man who doubted the identity of Shakespeare was not to be argued with.

In the first century these "Academics" would have consigned the Professor *ad leones*; in the Middle Ages to "the Stake." Professor Slater continued his investigations, and found undoubted traces of the woman's hand in many of the plays; and, at the suggestion of Captain Ward, included Lady Pembroke in the Group. The sister of Sidney, the friend of the Earl of Oxford, she had endeavoured to marry both of her sons, "the Incomparable Paire" of the Folio, the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, to Oxford's daughters. Both were engaged to the latter, and the Countess Susan married the Earl of Montgomery. Lady Pembroke was a cultured and well-known authoress. It is probable that she attracted Raleigh to the Group. Oxford belonged to a theological and scientific circle of which Raleigh was the President, and Raleigh might well have joined his literary group. He it was who interceded with Queen Elizabeth on Oxford's behalf, when he was restored to Royal favour in 1583.

Chambers (p. 76) refers to a letter, now lost, but last seen at Wilton in 1865, from Lady Pembroke to her son, telling him to bring James I to

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see *As You Like It*. "We have the man *Shakespeare* with us." She wanted to cajole the King on Raleigh's behalf—he came. Slater suggests that "the man Shakespeare" was Oxford, a welcome guest at Wilton. He was a friend of Raleigh and likely to intercede successfully on his behalf.

4 (i)

CHRONOLOGY

In the absence of any original manuscripts, chronology becomes largely a matter of conjecture, dependent on dates of registration or publication, and historical or meteorological incidents, which are often misleading guides. All we can say is that certain works existed on certain dates, though they may have existed five or ten years previously. But in order to identify them with Edward de Vere as the author, all the works composed by Shakespeare must have been begun before June 24, 1604, the date of the Earl's death. This condition is established in the case of the poems *Venus* and *Lucrece*, and the *Sonnets*. The plays remain.

Mrs. Eva Turner Clark, in her book *Shakespeare's Plays in the Order of their Writing*, contends that the plays were written by Edward de Vere between 1576 and 1590; that in 1590 the "Paul's Boys"—with whom the "Oxford Boys" were

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amalgamated in 1584, the joint company being put under John Lyly, Oxford's private secretary—caricatured Martin Mar-prelate on the stage as an ape, with the result that they were dissolved, for religious matters were forbidden on the stage.

Incidentally, in 1590, Shakspeare of Stratford would have been twenty-six years of age. Mrs. Clark partly justifies her chronological method on Hamlet's conversation with Polonius.

HAMLET. Good my Lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; *for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time.*

Many of the plays contain contemporary references from which the date of writing can be conjectured.

Mrs. Clark founds her case on the early records of the Court Revels, and writes:

It was then to the titles of plays, given at Court by the Lord Chamberlain's Company and the Paul's boys from 1576, that I gave my attention. None of the titles in the Records of the Court Revels is the same as titles belonging to any of the Shakespearean Plays (or they would have been noted long ago); but, in a study such as I was making, several titles were suggestive. When I found a title which seemed to point to a certain Shakespearean play, I went carefully through the play, and then read the history of the period just previous to the date on which the title was recorded. If the events of the

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time were found alluded to in the play, the play of which the title had already caught my attention, as suggestive of one of Shakespeare's plays, I felt justified in considering that my theory was in the course of being proved. After ten plays in succession were found to parallel in this fashion I felt that the matter was no longer a theory, but a demonstrated fact.

A summary of Mrs. Clark's treatment of *The Merchant of Venice* (usually dated 1596) illustrates her methods. In 1580 *The History of Portia and Demorantes* was shown at White Hall. The play was *The Merchant of Venice*, and support is found in Gosson's *School of Abuse* (1579), in which he praises a play recently seen at "The Bull," called *The Jew*, representing "the greediness of worldly chusers, and bloody minds of usurers." Plays were given at small theatres like "The Bull" preparatory to presentation at Court. The literary sources on which *The Merchant of Venice* was based were familiar to Oxford; and to them he added episodes of contemporary history, which tends to confirm that *The Jew*, *Portia and Demorantes* (a mistake in transcription for *The Merchants*), and *The Merchant of Venice*, are different titles for the same play.

The two episodes were: the proposed marriage between the Duke of Alençon and Queen Elizabeth, and the third Frobisher Expedition of 1578. In order to weave into the drama the

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vision of various envoys as suitors for the Queen's hand, Oxford made use of the caskets, suggested by the possession by the Sovereign of the time of three crowns, of iron, silver and gold, signifying the three countries of England, France and Ireland. Oxford was in close touch with the Queen at the time (1578-79) and puts into Portia's mouth these words:

But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband—O me, the word choose! I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father.

This is a direct reference by Oxford to the will of Henry VIII, which provided that the Queen should not marry anyone without the consent of the Privy Councillors.

The third Frobisher Expedition brought back a consignment of metal, supposed to be gold. Oxford had invested in the expedition and entered into a *bond* for £3,000, of which £2,000 represented shares taken from Lock, the accountant of the Company. The ore was found to be worthless, and Lock, who had known of this previously, was sent to the Fleet for fraud. The characters are identified as follows: *Portia*, the Queen; *Antonio*, the Earl of Oxford; *Bassanio*, Alençon; *Lock* is Shylock, "Shy" in the sense of "shady," "disreputable." It is significant that Antonio and

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Oxford entered into a *bond*, for the same sum, one for 3,000 ducats, the other for £3,000. Then again, Shylock says :

But ships are as boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats and water-rats; water-thieves and land-thieves; I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man, notwithstanding, is sufficient: three thousand ducats: I think I may take his bond.

Oxford had been attacked by pirates in 1576; and discharged one of his servants for fraud during his absence. He had had experience of water-thieves and land-thieves.

The trace of Oxford's hand is surely seen in the play, and *The History of Portia and Demorantes* (*The Merchants*), acted at Whitehall in February 1580, may well have been *The Merchant of Venice*, especially seeing that he was living in Venice in 1576. George Brandes ("William Shakespeare"), although a convinced Stratfordian, insisted that Shakespeare must have visited Italy. "The name Gobbo is a genuine Venetian name, and suggests, moreover, the kneeling stone figure, 'Il Gobbo di Rialto,' that forms the base of the granite pillar to which, in former days, the decrees of the Republic were affixed. Shakespeare knew that the Exchange was held on the Rialto Island." But it is impossible to suppose that Shakspeare of Stratford ever visited Italy.

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In this interesting and suggestive manner, Mrs. Clark has dealt with the entire series of the Shakespeare plays; and definitely dismisses the case for Shakspeare of Stratford as the author.

Admiral Holland, on the internal evidence of the plays, shows that the first play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was written in 1573. Among the thirteen reasons is the following:

And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities. (I, i)

No doubt they rose up early to observe the rite
of May. (IV, i)

"New Moon and May Day coincide averagely, though not regularly, once in twenty-nine years. This was the case in 1573."

A Midsummer Night's Dream was apparently revised by Oxford and his son-in-law Derby. Professor Abel Lefranc has shown conclusively that the scene between Oberon and Puck, referring to the "Fair Vestal thron'd in the West," is an allusion to the Elvetam celebrations when Lord Hertford entertained the Queen in 1591; and the references to bad weather would seem to refer to 1594.

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TRADITIONAL CHRONOLOGY

Periods of Publication.

It remains to consider the traditional aspect of chronology as presented by Chambers. He shows that "by the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth fifteen Shakespearean texts had appeared" (p. 132). There were three periods of publication:

1ST PERIOD

| <i>Play</i> | <i>Publication</i> | <i>Composition (Holland)</i> |
|---|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2 <i>Henry VI</i> (First part of the Contention) | 1594 | |
| 3 <i>Henry VI</i> (True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York) | 1595 | |
| <i>Titus Andronicus</i> | 1594 | 1577 (Clark) |
| <i>Richard II</i> | 1597 | 1583 |
| <i>Richard III</i> | 1597 | 1580 (Clark) |
| <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> | 1597 | 1582 |
| <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> | 1598 | 1578 |
| 1 <i>Henry IV</i> | 1598 | 1583 (Clark) |
| 2 <i>Henry IV</i> | 1600 | 1595 |
| <i>Henry V</i> | 1600 | 1596 |
| <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> | 1600 | 1579 (Clark) |
| <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> | 1600 | 1573 |
| <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> | 1600 | 1579 |
| <i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> | 1602 | 1593 |
| <i>Hamlet</i> | 1603 | 1583 |

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2ND PERIOD

(1608-09)

| <i>Play</i> | <i>Publication</i> | <i>Composition</i> (<i>Holland</i>) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| <i>King Lear</i> | 1608 | |
| <i>Troilus and Cressida</i> | 1609 | |
| <i>Pericles</i> | 1609 | |
| <i>Sonnets</i> | 1609 | 1595-99 (Chambers) |

3RD PERIOD

(1622-23)

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Othello</i> | 1622 (acted at Court, 1604) |
| First Folio | 1623 |

After the Earl of Oxford's death in 1604 there were no fresh publications until 1608-09. The Countess completed the sale of King's Place to Fulke Greville in 1609; and, while affairs were being wound up, the three plays and the *Sonnets* were published. These publications were not authentic. Lee says: "Butter's edition of *King Lear* followed a badly transcribed playhouse copy, and abounds in gross typographical errors." He alludes to *Troilus* as "obviously stolen wares," and suggests that *Pericles* was "derived from the notes of an irresponsible shorthand reporter of a performance in the theatre." The case of the *Sonnets* is considered later. They were, together

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with the plays, probably obtained from King's Place and handed over to "procurers" of manuscripts as things of little value. The mass of Shakespearean manuscripts, including most of the eighteen plays published in 1623, would have been removed shortly after the Earl's death, possibly at the instance of his daughters, the Countesses of Derby, of Pembroke, and of Berkshire. It does not follow that there were any autographs. Oxford, in order to preserve his anonymity, would issue transcripts, and probably the autograph copies were destroyed.

Colonel Ward in this connection refers to *Troilus and Cressida*, and says:

This is the first case of a Shakespeare play being provided with a preface, the object being to excite interest in a novelty and to urge people to buy.

Its last sentences are as follows:

And believe this, that when hee is gone, and his Comedies out of sale, you will scramble for them, and set up a new English Inquisition . . . since by *the grand possessors wills* I beleeeve you should have prayd for them rather than been prayd. And so I leave all such to be prayd for (for the states of their wits healths) that will not praise it. Vale.

"The grand possessors," certainly aristocrats, may have been Oxford's daughters.

During this period, 1608-09, Shakspeare of Stratford is supposed to have been in London

busily engaged in writing plays; and it is remarkable that he should have submitted without demur to the unauthorised publication of three of his plays, and above all, of such personal revelations as the *Sonnets*. The inference remains that Edward de Vere alone had the right to protest; but he had reached that "undiscovered country" from whose bourne there is no return, and was beyond all power of protest.

The first great period of Shakespearean production, therefore, ended with the death of Edward de Vere in 1604; the second period of doubtful publication coincided with the clearance and evacuation of his house, King's Place, in 1608-09; and, until the First Folio Edition of 1623, there were no further publications of new plays, except that of *Othello* in 1622, the edition being from a playhouse copy differing considerably from that used for the Folio.

It seems, therefore, that Edward de Vere published *Venus* and *Lucrece* in 1593-94. He then proceeded to complete the *Sonnets*; and revise the plays as literature, for they had been written chiefly for the stage. After the publication of the second quarto of *Hamlet* (1604), "fell serjeant death" intervened on June 24, 1604. The *Sonnets* were published after his death, in 1609; but, with the exception of the doubtful and posthumous copy of *Othello* in 1622, the publication of authentic plays ceased until the compilation of the Folio in 1623.

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THE UNPUBLISHED PLAYS

It has been shown that fifteen plays were published by 1604. To these must be added ten more which had appeared before that year, some of which were in Meres' list (1598) :

| Play | Composition | |
|---|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Orthodox | Holland |
| <i>Two Gentlemen</i> | 1594 | 1576 |
| <i>The Comedy of Errors</i> | 1592 | 1577 (Clark) ("Historie of Error") |
| <i>All's Well (Love's Labour's Won)</i> | before 1598 | 1579 |
| <i>King John</i> | 1596 | 1590 |
| <i>1 Henry VI</i> | acted 1592 | |
| <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> | 1593 | 1578 (Clark) |
| <i>Julius Cæsar</i> | 1599 | 1602 |
| <i>As You Like It</i> | S. R. 1600 | 1589 |
| <i>Twelfth Night</i> | acted 1601 | 1580 (Clark) |
| <i>Troilus and Cressida</i> | 1601 | 1598 (Allen) |

The above twenty-five plays were thus in existence between 1593 (date of *Venus*) and 1604.

Says Mr. Drinkwater: "Inconveniently for Mr. Allen's thesis the Earl of Oxford died in 1604, after which date several of the Shakespearean plays were written." Obviously, neither registration, performance, nor publication imply the date of composition. For example, *Coriolanus* and *Timon* were first heard of in 1623, nine years after the death of Shakspeare of Stratford.

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The following evidence is relevant to the dates and composition of these plays:

Measure for Measure. Performed 1604, and therefore probably written during Oxford's lifetime. Allen dates it 1581, as it is based on the intrigue between Oxford and Anne Vavasour in that year, when both were sent to the Tower. Sir Thomas Knyvet, the uncle of Anne, fought a duel with Oxford in 1582, in which both were wounded, Oxford seriously. Hence apparently: "So I made lame by fortune's dearest spite" (*Sonnet* 37).

Burghley, writing to Hatton in 1582, said of Oxford: "He has been punished so far, or further, than any like crime hath been, first by Her Majesty, and then by the drab's friend in revenge, to the peril of his life." (Anne Vavasour was a noted courtesan.)

Othello. Performed at Court in 1604, and presumably written during Lord Oxford's lifetime. Holland finds fourteen incidents to date the play in 1588, the most important being astronomical. He writes: "The whole combined phenomenon is one which occurs once in an average of forty-four years, and it did occur on Sunday, December 8, 1588." Moreover, the references to the Armada (of 1588) seem unmistakable.

King Lear. Chambers recognises that *King Lear* must be dated by the topical allusion to the eclipses:

These late eclipses of the sun and moon
Portend no good to us. (I, ii)

He goes on to say that these eclipses "must be the nearly total eclipse of the sun on October 2, 1605, and the partial eclipse of the moon on September 27, 1605." This is impossible for two reasons:

1. These eclipses were not visible in England.
2. There is some mistake, because eclipses of sun and moon must be separated by not less than fourteen days.

Holland shows that during the reigns of Elizabeth and James there was only one total eclipse of the sun visible in England. This was in 1598; and it was preceded a fortnight earlier by a nearly total eclipse of the moon. *King Lear*, therefore, may safely be dated in, or shortly after, 1598; a date supported by references to the trial of Friswood Williams at "Hackney" (where Oxford was then living) in 1598 (Holland).

Macbeth. Says Chambers: "The text is unsatisfactory . . . probably there has also been some interpolation." William Kempe (1600) mentions a "miserable stolen story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth, or Mac-somewhat." Holland shows that the doctrine of "equivocation," referred to by the Porter, was prominent at the trials of Francis Southwell (1595) and Edward Squire (1598). *Macbeth* may therefore safely be dated between 1595 and 1600.

Antony and Cleopatra. Says Chambers: "There is reason for putting *Antony and Cleopatra* earlier

than 1608. In 1607 Samuel Daniel issued a new edition of his *Certain Small Workes* and herein made considerable changes in his *Cleopatra* of 1594. These, as carefully analysed by Case, seem to me clearly to show the influence of Shakespeare's play." All that we can say, therefore, is that *Antony and Cleopatra* was written between 1594 and 1607; and the greater part of this period fell during Lord Oxford's lifetime.

Cymbeline. Nothing whatever is known of this play, except that it was performed in 1611, and was first printed in the Folio. There is a diversity of opinion regarding it. Robertson thought that "Chapman had a share in re-casting a pre-Shakespearean play, perhaps partly by Peele." Mrs. Clark considers it a play of 1578, revised after Oxford's death. Allen finds that, in common with *Pericles* and *The Tempest*, it is "almost, if not wholly, non-Shakespearean." Gollancz suggests that this "unsatisfactory" play possibly "represents in many cases the poet's rough-cast notes rather than his finished work."

It is probably an imitation by Wilkins, based on an old Court masque by the Earl of Oxford.

The Winter's Tale. Holland dates the play 1584. Mrs. Clark agrees and refers to an incident in which the Queen and Captain Rall (Raleigh) were concerned at a dance at Greenwich in 1584.

There is an allusion to the current price of wool which only applies to the early fifteen-'eighties:

Every tod yields pound and odd shilling.

There is also evidence of the hand of Bacon, pointed out by Sir George Greenwood, himself not a Baconian, from Bacon's *Essay on Gardens*, not published until 1625, "nine years after player Shakspeare's death." There is parallelism between "Lillies of all kinds, the flower-de-luce being one" (VI, iv), and Bacon's "flower-de-luces and lillies of all natures." Both lists are arranged according to seasons. If Perdita speaks of "streak'd gillyvors," Bacon speaks of the "stock gillyflower." If Perdita says, "For you there's rosemary and rue, these keep seeming and savour all the winter long," Bacon says, "For December and January and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all the winter, rosemary, lavender, sweet marjoram." "Cowslips" substituted for "both oxlips": primroses, violets, daffodils, marigold, marjoram, besides those already mentioned, are common to both lists. Then we have two similar lists of flowers according to the seasons, whether of the year or of human life; a complete and extraordinary agreement as to the philosophy of "Nature" and "Art"—to wit, that the two are essentially one, since art is part of nature. Finally both writers are much concerned with the colours and varieties of "streak'd gillyvors" and "stock gillyvors."

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Coming from an authority of Greenwood's standing, these comparisons cannot be lightly ignored. Further, it may be noted that Bacon never made mention of William Shakespeare in his works.

The Winter's Tale may be an Oxford play written in 1584, finished by Bacon after Oxford's death.

The Tempest. Performed 1611.

Looney holds that *The Tempest* is not a "Shakespearean" play; Allen agrees. The chief source of the play was a private letter written by William Strachey, Recorder of Virginia, to an "Excellent Lady" in England. The letter, containing confidential information for the London Council of the Virginia Company, reached England in September 1610; but was not published until 1625, after the dissolution of the Virginia Company in 1624. William of Stratford could hardly have seen this document.

Slater and Ward suggest that *The Tempest* was a collaboration by Lady Pembroke (the "Excellent Lady") and Sir Walter Raleigh; that Prospero in his cell is Sir Walter in the Tower; and that the object of the play was to persuade King James to release Raleigh. The Epilogue, spoken by Prospero-Raleigh and addressed to the audience (of whom the King was one on November 1, 1611), concludes thus:

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And my ending is despair
Unless I be reliev'd by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
Let your indulgence set me free.

Lady Pembroke and Prince Henry had been striving for years to get Raleigh released; and her son was a leading member of the Virginia Company. Raleigh and William Strachey were both Middle Templars in the early fifteen-seventies; and in 1611 Raleigh had written a treatise about the Duchy of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples.

Slater says: "*The Tempest* is inspired throughout by observations and reports of the West Indies, which Raleigh explored; and of Virginia, which he tried to colonise. For instance,

CALIBAN. No more dams I'll make for fish.

The natives made ingenious dams, and Raleigh's settlers depended largely on the fish thus caught."

The knowledge of seamanship shown and the nautical terms used in *The Tempest* have often been commented on.

"All this suits the gifted adventurer, whom Spenser calls 'the Shepherd of the Ocean.'"

Coriolanus. Folio 1623.

Says Chambers: "Not a satisfactory text . . . there is practically no concrete evidence as to date." Allen thinks it was left unfinished, and

perhaps, as Robertson says, completed by Chapman.

A vital allusion in the play, rarely if ever touched on by academic commentators, is the reference to the circulation of the blood. This discovery was first announced by William Hervey in 1616. *Coriolanus*, therefore, cannot be the work either of Oxford or William of Stratford. Slater and Ward trace a feminine hand: probably an allegorical biography of Sir Walter Raleigh written after his execution (1618) by his old friend and lover, Lady Pembroke.

Says Slater: "Some passages could not possibly have been written by a man" (p. 218).

Timon of Athens. Folio 1623.

Collaboration is generally admitted: probably an old Oxford play (1576), left unfinished by him, and completed in the reign of King James. One point tells in Oxford's favour and against William of Stratford. A main source of the play is an academic play called *Timon*, which only exists in manuscript. This suggests that the author was a scholar—which would fit Oxford, but not Shakspeare.

Henry VIII. Performed 1613.

Chambers admits collaboration with Fletcher. Greenwood agrees with Spedding that it is not by Shakespeare, but was written by Fletcher and Massinger.

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Pericles. Published 1609.

The 1609 quarto was rejected by Lee as not authentic, and the play was excluded from the First and Second Folios, though admitted in the Third (1664). Allen thinks it is mainly by Wilkins.

The Two Noble Kinsmen. Published 1634.

Excluded from all three Folios, and obviously an imitation.

Such is the evidence available regarding the composition and dates of these thirteen latter plays. It is claimed that *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* were completed previously to 1604. That *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Timon* were left unfinished by Oxford. That *Coriolanus* and *The Tempest* were not by him. And that *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* were non-Shakespearean.

A careful study of the chronology of the plays, therefore, shows us that all, except a few obviously spurious ones, were written in or before 1604, the year of Oxford's death. This is a devastating fact for the Stratfordian theory of authorship. Moreover, practically all orthodox commentators, including Chambers, date *Twelfth Night* and *Merry Wives* in 1600 and 1601 respectively. But quite recently (1931) Dr. Hotson made an important discovery in the Public Record Office which proves conclusively that these plays were in

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existence at least as early as 1596 and 1597 respectively. This means, of course, that both parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V* must be earlier than 1596, as they were obviously written before *Merry Wives*. But the years 1592-97 are already occupied—according to Chambers—by eleven plays; and it is impossible, if William of Stratford were the author, to push the plays back earlier than 1592. It comes to this. To the eleven plays written 1592-97 we must add five more which Hotson has shown to have been in existence before 1597. In other words, in those five years Shakespeare turned out no fewer than sixteen magnificent plays, two long poems amounting to nearly 500 stanzas, and some at least of the *Sonnets*. And all this in addition to his work as an actor and payee of the Chamberlain's company, and as a maltster at Stratford-on-Avon. Such an output is clearly impossible.

It is curious that orthodox critics who attempt to meet the Oxford authorship theory invariably do so by using a chronological argument. With weary monotony they echo one another: "Many of the Shakespeare plays were written after Oxford's death." I have just dealt with the falsity of this statement. And I have also shown that on chronological grounds alone it is, since Dr. Hotson's discovery, no longer possible to believe in the Stratfordian authorship.

TOPICAL AND POLITICAL REFERENCES

Chambers doubts whether, excepting some passages of satire, there is "much of the topical in Shakespeare, whose mind normally moved more upon quite another plane of relation to life." Dover Wilson, however, is certain that "Shakespeare did not deliberately avoid topical allusions, as those who worship the Olympian claim. . . . Picture his eager spirit following the doings of Essex, Raleigh and Drake. . . . Not his 'tragic life-story' of which we know nothing, but the life at the Court of Elizabeth and James, the passions and doings of the great men of the land, the political and social events of the hour—these form the real background of his plays." Bismark again, a Stratford sceptic, considered that Shakespeare must have been behind the scenes in politics, and well acquainted with the art of governing men. We may safely credit the view of *Hamlet* that the plays are the "brief abstract and chronicle of the time."

No one has proved more clearly than Mr. Percy Allen the truth of these words. One of his reviewers finds that he possesses "a complete and enviable knowledge of Shakespearean dramas, and a vast mass of poetical and historical learning." His first two contributions towards the solution of the Oxford hypothesis were:

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“THE CASE FOR EDWARD DE VERE, THE
SEVENTEENTH EARL OF OXFORD,
AS ‘SHAKESPEARE,’”

and

“THE OXFORD-SHAKESPEARE CASE
CORROBORATED”

In these books he not only covers most of the ground, but is able to confirm the existence of references to the Earl of Oxford, which, in many cases suggest, in others practically reveal, him as “William Shakespeare” in disguise.

In the first chapter of *The Case Corroborated*, he alludes to confirmation by a cipher of the meaning of *ipse* in the “William” scene of *As You Like It* (V, i), referred to in his previous book (p. 260).

William (of Stratford) is asked his age by Touchstone (Oxford-Shakespeare), and replies, “Five and twenty, sir,” which was the age of Shakspeare in 1589, the date of the writing of the play. Thereafter, follows:

TOUCH. Give me your hand. Art thou learned?

WILL. No, Sir.

TOUCH. Then learn this of me; to have is to have; for it is a figure in rhetoric that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other: *for all your writers do consent that ipse is he; now you are not ipse; for I am he.*

Otherwise, “Are you learned enough to have written these plays? No! Well, water being

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poured from a cup, into a transparent glass, 'by filling the one doth empty the other.' There cannot, therefore, be two authors of the plays. All the writers, Harvey, Chapman, Jonson and others are whispering that *ipse is he*, or that the works were written by a courtier or learned person, and it is clear that you are neither of these nor, in fact, *ipse, for I am he.*"

After discovering this interpretation, Allen found that *ipse* spells Vere in three simple ciphers, given in W. B. Theobald's *Shake-speare's Sonnets Unmasked*, where they are designated S, R, K.

S assumes A = 1, B = 2; while R assumes Z = 1, Y = 2; and K is a simple compound of the two ciphers; A = 27, B = 28 to I. J = 35. Thereafter K = 10, L = 11 to Z.

| | S. | R. | K. | | S. | R. | K. |
|---|-------|----|----|---|-------|----|----|
| I | 9 | 16 | 35 | V | 20 | 5 | 20 |
| P | 15 | 10 | 15 | E | 5 | 20 | 31 |
| S | 18 | 7 | 18 | R | 17 | 8 | 17 |
| E | 5 | 20 | 31 | E | 5 | 20 | 31 |
| | <hr/> | | | | <hr/> | | |
| | 47 | 53 | 99 | | 47 | 53 | 99 |
| | <hr/> | | | | <hr/> | | |

Allen compares the parallel dialogue in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (IV, i), in which Sir Hugh Evans catechises Master William Page on his limited educational attainments. He forcibly points out that there are only two persons named "William" in Shakespearean drama; both are

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dragged into the plays without reference to the context; and both are catechised in a manner suggestive of their inferiority and in repudiation of their being authors of the works of William Shakespeare (I, p. 263).

In his analysis of Ben Jonson's comedy, *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1598), he shows that the play is not only a skit on *Twelfth Night*, but also on Oxford and Shakspeare of Stratford, the former as the actual though anonymous author, the latter as the alleged and spurious author, of the plays. Sir Puntarvolo is undoubtedly Oxford; while Sogliardo is accepted as Shakspeare of Stratford; who, shortly before the publication of the play, had begun in 1597 to acquire land, had procured a coat of arms, and the right to call himself "a Gentleman and Householder." It is obviously significant that Oxford and Shakspeare should be brought into such close relationship in the play:

SOG. I' faith, I thank them: I can write myself gentleman now; here's my patent, it cost me thirty pounds by this breath.

SIR PUNT. A very fair coat, well charged and full of armoury.

SOG. Nay, it has as much of variety of colours in it, as you have seen a coat have: how like you the crest, Sir?

SIR PUNT. I understand it not well, what is't?

SOG. Marry, sir, it is *your boar without a head*, rampant, a boar without a head, that's very rare.

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(The Oxford crest was a boar.)

Finally Sir Punt says: "Let the word be 'Not without mustard.' Your crest is very rare, sir."

Shakspere's actual motto was, "Non sans droict."

Ben Jonson must have implied a hidden meaning in this absurd crest, "A Boar without a head," and seeing the remark is made to Sir Puntarvolo as Oxford, the solution would seem to be that "you with the brains (or the head) are the real poet, I with the body am the proxy."

In the next play, *Cynthia's Revels*, Jonson levels his satire at the Earl of Oxford as Amorphous, and again as the author of the Shakespearean plays. Mr. Allen finds an important clue in an obvious parody by Mercury, Echo and Amorphous, of Oxford's "Echo Song." Again, Jonson, as Mr. Allen has shown, borrowed enormously from Shakespeare, and in the following passage accuses Oxford of the same practice:

ASOTUS. How, if they would have me to make verses?

AMORPHOUS. Why, you must prove the aptitude of your genius; if you find none, you must harken out a vein and buy, provided you pay for their silence as for the work, then you may securely call it your own.

It is suggested, as has been submitted above in connection with the group or secret committee,

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that playwrights were made use of, and paid for their services.

In the *Pilgrimage to and Return from Parnassus*, Oxford appears as Amoretto, and there is again reference to William of Stratford as an Actor, and to his coat of arms, and acquisition of wealth:

STUDIOSO. England affordes those glorious vagabonds that carried erst their fardels on their backs.

.
*With mouthing words that bitter wits had framed
They purchase lands and now esquires are (namde)
made.*

The reference to the coat of arms granted to William of Stratford is probable; but he is only credited to be "the mouther," not the author; and yet by this time the poems *Venus* and *Lucrece* and some of the plays had been published.

He finds a remarkable parallel in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Greene's Groat's-worth of Wit*, referred to in the first chapter, in connection with the first appearance of William of Stratford in London. Act II, vii:

*The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns,
The current that with gentle murmur glides
Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;*

This is clearly a paraphrase of Greene's passage on Oxford as the "upstart crow."

Stop shallow water still running, it will rage.

Shallow water was shown to be an Ox-ford and a worm (Ver).

The play was written before 1592 (first draft 1576) and Greene must have "had the passage in mind," says Mr. Allen.

In *The Winter's Tale*, Autolycus resembles Oxford in many respects, and Mr. Allen attaches importance to the following passage:

He seems to be of great authority; close with him give him gold; and, *though authority be a stubborn bear*, yet he is oft led by the nose with gold: show the inside of your purse to the outside of his hand, and no more ado. Remember "stoned" and "flayed alive."

He assumes that Oxford was required to leave the Court by that stubborn bear authority, namely the Queen and her Council, was given (in 1586) £1,000 a year from the Secret Service Fund.

Mr. Allen's next work was

"THE LIFE-STORY OF EDWARD DE VERE
AS 'WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,'"

in which he follows step by step the career of Oxford, weaving into the story the plays in their successive order, supported by topical and political allusions. The bent of Oxford's mind turned to literature in 1572; and in that year, notorious for the massacre of St. Bartholomew, he was shaping

the themes which afterwards found expression in *Twelfth Night* (written 1580): the proposed marriage of the Queen with Alençon: Olivia being the Queen: Orsino mainly Alençon: Hatton, Malvolio: Sidney, Aguecheek: Fabian and Feste, Oxford himself. When Sir Toby calls Olivia "a Cataian" he refers to the Cathay Company and the third Frobisher expedition of 1578, in which both the Queen and Oxford were losers. The signature to the forged letter, "Thy Fortunate Unhappy," refers to Hatton's posy "Si Fortunatus Infelix," and so on—a treasure-house of contemporary allusions.

In 1573 Oxford wrote, as Holland thinks, his first play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, though it seems probable that *The Comedy of Errors* was really the first play, written in 1570.

The Earl was in Italy and Sicily in 1575-76, and there are distinct links with Shakespeare's plays. He is the mournful traveller in *As You Like It*, who has reason to be sad, lisps and wears strange suits, and sells his lands to see those of other men—a statement which is biographical in connection with the cost of Oxford's tour. *The Comedy of Errors*, with its setting in Syracuse, was then drafted; with Illyria of *Twelfth Night* across the Adriatic. *Romeo and Juliet* is concerned with the Howard-Arundel quarrel, through their cousin Sir Thomas Knyvet and his niece Anne Vavasour. The street brawls between the Montagues and Capulets

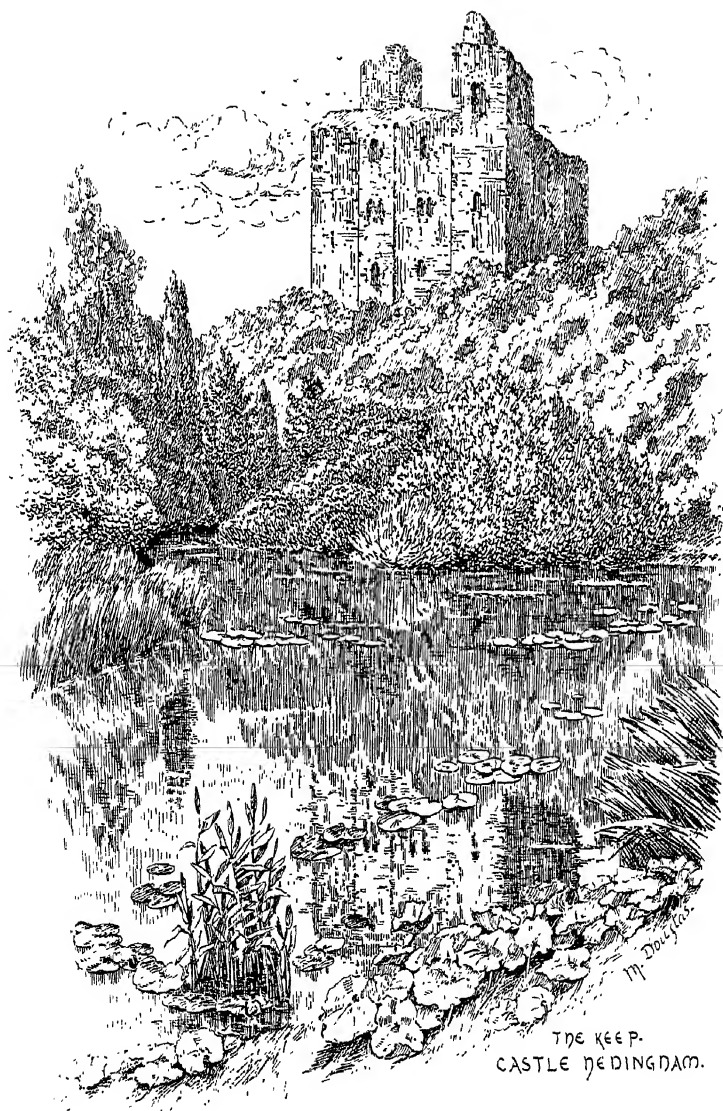
refer to the encounters between Oxford's men and those of Knyvet. This same Anne Vavasour appears as Juliet in *Measure for Measure*, a play "fashioned out of the most bitter experience of Oxford's life" and "a dramatisation of the stern measures taken against the Catholics from the year 1581 onwards, after Oxford's denunciation of the Howard-Arundel group." Thus does Mr. Allen analyse play after play, and reveal numbers of contemporary incidents connected with each of them. He also identifies no less than 112 Shakespearean characters with actual persons.

Mr. Allen's next work was

"THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE AND CHAPMAN
IN RELATION TO FRENCH HISTORY,"

in which he shows clearly that Oxford was the historical original of *Hamlet* the Prince, and the author of the play; and that Chapman, well knowing these facts, wrote the *Revenge of Bussy* as a counterblast. Further, that *Macbeth* and *Lear* are companion plays—with Catherine de Medici as First Witch, and as Goneril: and that both plays are strongly influenced by Agrippa d'Aubigné's epic poem, *Les Tragiques*, written about 1577.

In an Introduction, Miss Marjorie Bowen, after commenting on the apathetic and even hostile attitude of orthodox scholars towards Shakespearean research, adds:



THE KEEP.
CASTLE BEDINGHAM.

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Therefore, between the astonishing attitude of the learned, in refusing even to discuss any possible departure from orthodoxy, and the angry gibes of the unlearned, who are just sufficiently interested not to wish their conventional beliefs disturbed, the extraordinary advances made in the last few years into this most intricate problem have been largely ignored or ridiculed, and have only been conducted under circumstances of considerable difficulty and discouragement. It is not creditable to English scholarship that this should be so; it might have been thought that the whole of the work in connection with the discoveries following Mr. Looney's remarkable book, *Shakespeare Identified*, would have received at least sympathetic attention and respectful criticism from Shakespearean scholars. This, however, has not been the case, and, up to the present, neither Mr. Looney's book, which was the first to put forward Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, as the main author of the plays, nor the research work of Colonel B. R. Ward, which tended both to elucidate and confirm this theory, nor the most important labours of Dr. Rendall on the *Sonnets* and handwriting of these (which also, in a most remarkable manner, strengthened the case for Oxford), nor Father de Vere Beauclerk's remarkable chart of the portraits, nor the minute, erudite and enthusiastic works of Mr. Percy Allen, have received that attention and consideration which is undoubtedly their due.

Again:

The increasing weight of evidence in favour of Lord Oxford's claim as "William Shakespeare," how-

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ever; the remarkable manner in which one discovery leads to another, the gradual fitting together of one fact into another, until much of what was hopelessly puzzling becomes absolutely clear, has gradually become so extremely important that a sufficient number of people are being interested (and in many cases convinced), to ensure the movement in making headway.

Again:

A fixed belief in the Stratford man's authorship would, of a necessity, rule out any linking of the dramas with the author's life, as it is impossible to find any but the most strained connection (that of the conventional so-called "Warwickshire rustics," etc.) between what we know of William Shakspeare and the evidences of character and experiences on the part of the author that may be abundantly gathered from the poems and plays. If Lord Oxford is put in the place of the author, not only is there no difficulty on this point, but the whole of the life and the work fall so naturally into one piece that it becomes almost impossible to consider coincidence or chance as an explanation.

Mr. Allen illustrates, in this brilliant book, the vast amount of allusion to, and more or less symbolic treatment of, contemporary events, foreign and domestic history, English and European characters in the plays; it is obvious that Lord Oxford not "might have had," but *must* have had, all the necessary knowledge, training and insight to gather, store and use such material, and that William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon could not have done so. The cry

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that "everything is possible to genius" will not do here; a man in the position of the Warwickshire maltster could not, whatever his genius, have acquired the learning, the knowledge, the intimate acquaintance with matters known only to politicians and courtiers, that are so bewilderingly shown in the "Shakespeare" works.

M. Georges Connes, the distinguished Professor of Dijon, supports the above view (*Revue Anglo-Américaine*, February 1934):

Quinze volumes, émanant d'une soixantaine d' "amateurs," en cinq années: le mérite n'est pas mince, si l'on songe aux difficultés qu'ils ont à surmonter pour faire entendre leur voix. Ces difficultés sont sérieuses: je ne doute pas que le désir secret de l'orthodoxie stratfordienne, comme de toutes les orthodoxies, serait, si elle était la maîtresse, d'étouffer cette voix; même ses manières courtoises, lorsqu'elles le sont, et les indications, tacites ou exprimées, de son indifférence et de sa tranquillité, ne cachent pas toujours un certain degré d'agacement; lorsqu'elle le peut, elle ferme aux hérétiques la porte des grandes revues; ne voulant pas se dire qu'il n'y a aucun danger que personne fasse confusion entre une hypothèse et une découverte, elle refuse son concours à la mise en circulation des hypothèses nouvelles, qui sont pourtant le pain dont vit la science; sans examen sérieux du fond, elle se trouve aisément des raisons de réserver les facilités de publication à la "vraie science," qui est bien entendu la sienne.

INSTANCES OF PERSONAL REFERENCES

The plays contain, woven into the text, many references to Oxford, personal and topical, some of which are unintelligible until the relevancy to Oxford is explained.

The Comedy of Errors (IV, ii)

Mrs. Clark shows that in 1571 Oxford and Christopher Hatton had been awarded prizes in a tournament, the former a tablet of diamonds, the latter a *gold bell and chains*. It is conjectured that Hatton at some time asked Oxford, "Do you hear it ring?" and that Oxford, intentionally misunderstanding, answered, "What, the chain?" To which Hatton replied, "No, no, the bell." Anyhow, this short dialogue is found, word for word, in the play. The conjecture is based on the existing rivalry between the two for the Queen's favour.

The play is founded on the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, of which there was no translation, when it was written, and of which the Earl of Oxford bought a copy in 1569.

Mrs. Clark identifies it with *The Historie of Error*, acted at Court in 1576. But it was probably written about five or six years earlier, because there are obvious topical allusions in the opening

scene to the trade reprisals between England (Ephesus) and Spain (Syracuse), which took place in 1569 and 1570.

Two Gentlemen of Verona (IV, i)

Admiral Holland writes:

When Valentine is asked by the outlaws how long he has been in Milan, he replies, "Sixteen months," although the action of the Play would make it considerably less time. This peculiarity as to length of time has been pointed out by commentators. Sixteen months is the time the Earl of Oxford was absent abroad—too extraordinary to be a coincidence. Valentine is captured by brigands on his departure from Milan, while de Vere was misused by pirates on his way back to England.

Slater (p. 42) points out the remarkable local knowledge shown by the poet:

Beyond Mantua is Venice, and the Corso Venezia in Milan runs N.N.-W. to the Porta Venezia . . . the North gate to which Valentine directed his servant Speed. Proteus arranged to meet Thurio at St. Gregory's Well, and the Church of S. Gregorio is just North of the Porta Venezia. Every geographical detail in the play is exact, and it is hard to believe that the story is not based on personal recollection. So far as travel routes in N. Italy are concerned, Shakespeare's geography seems flawless.

The rare oath, "by Janus," occurs, indicating that the poet knew of Alberti's *Descrittione di Tutta*

Italia, in which is mention of a temple and a marble arch to Janus.

Much Ado About Nothing

A reply by Oxford to the Howard-Arundel charges which Allen shows are even parodied in the duologue (V, i) between Dogberry and Don Pedro (p. 160).

Mrs. Clark quotes as follows (III, iv):

BEATRICE. 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin. 'Tis time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill. Heigho!

MARGARET. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

BEATRICE. For the letter that begins them all, H.

MARGARET. Well, an you be not turned Turk there's no more sailing by the Star.

(H. would seem to stand for Happiness.)

Mrs. Clark submits that the Queen called Oxford her "Turk" (see Chapter II). The Oxford coat of arms contained a "mullet argent" or silver five-pointed star. There was at the time estrangement between the Earl and Countess of Oxford. Margaret implied that, if Beatrice (Lady Oxford) didn't change her mind and turn to her Turk (Oxford) he would not again give her the chance of sailing by his Star, otherwise of living with him.

Much Ado About Nothing

Admiral Holland refers to Act V, iii :

Beatrice says to Benedict (Oxford) not one wise man in twenty will praise himself. He replies that it is "most expedient for the wise—if *Don Worm*, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary—to be trumpet of his own virtue as I am to myself." Now there is only one person whose conscience could be an impediment to a man blowing his own trumpet, and that is the person himself; therefore by *Don Worm*, Benedict refers to himself—*Ver* being the French for a worm.

The Taming of the Shrew

Slater writes, quoting Vincentio (V, i): "Thy father! O villain! he is a *sailmaker* in Bergamo." The poet was aware that the town was then celebrated for sail-making owing to the soil being specially suitable (*Schotti Itinerarium Italiæ*). "How many Englishmen either in Shakespeare's time or since, were aware of this obscure fact?" Allen finds in the play a dramatisation by Oxford of the marriage of his sister, Lady Mary Vere, to Lord Willoughby, and refers to various analogies.

Mr. Looney shows that in writing from Padua to Burghley, Oxford mentioned the names of three Italians, two of whom were Baptista Nigrone and Benedict Spinola. He concludes that the name in the play of "the rich Gentleman of

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Padua, Baptista Minola," the father of Katharina, is a composite of the two names.

Romeo and Juliet

Mr. Looney refers to the following parallels between passages in the play and Oxford's poems:

The play (I, i):

He stole into the covert of a wood
I, measuring his affections by my own,
That most are busied when they're most alone.

De Vere:

That with the careful culver, climbs the worm and
withered tree,
To entertain my thoughts, and there my hap to
moan
That never am less idle lo! than when I am alone.

The play (I, v):

Patience perforce . . . makes my flesh tremble.

De Vere:

Patience perforce is such a pinching pain.

The play (I, i):

A choking gall and a preserving sweet
(I, i, 200)
Now seeming sweet convert to bitter gall.
(I, v, 94)

De Vere:

His bitter ball is sugared bliss.

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The play (I, ii):

Prodigious birth of love it is to me
That I must *love a loathed enemy*.

De Vere:

O cruel hap and hard estate
That forceth me *to love my foe*.

The play (I, iv), Romeo (Oxford):

For I am proverb'd with *a grandsire phrase*;
I'll be *a candle-holder*, and look on.
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am *done*.

MER. Tut! dun's the mouse, the constable's own word:
If thou art dun, we'll draw thee from the mire
Of—save your reverence—*love, wherein thou stick'st*
Up to the ears.

Holland shows that Oxford's grandmother's name was Elizabeth Trussell; an old way of spelling "Trestle"; and an old meaning of the word is a stand or frame for candles or tapers in religious worship. The crest of the Trussells was such a *Trestle* or rack for candles; the design appears on her husband's arms and in that of the Earl of Oxford. Mr. Kennedy Skipton points out that Elizabeth Trussell's grandfather (Oxford's great grandfather) was *Sir John Dun*.

Oxford's "grandsire" was thus a Trussell by name, and he himself literally "a candle-holder," while both he and Mercutio play on the connection with Sir John Dun. As Allen identifies Juliet with Anne Vavasour, Oxford's mistress, there is obvious

meaning in Mercutio's reply. That this passage refers to Oxford would seem to amount to fact—not conjecture.

The Merchant of Venice

Oxford, in the course of his travels (1575-76), resided in Venice for some months in a house still identified, and was then considering the play. Says Slater: "We have mention of gondolas and the Rialto (not only the Bridge but the Square where merchants met), a correct statement of Venetian law on the rights of aliens, and the mention of 'the trajet' (traghetto) which trades to Venice from Padua, described in Guazzo's *Civile Conversation* (tr. Peddie, 1581). There is also the Castle of Belmont, after a plot of land near Venice, Belmonte.

"It is difficult to believe that these allusions were not based on local knowledge."

Further, Admiral Holland has shown that Belmont, in *The Merchant of Venice*, is really a place called Montebello, near Genoa. This means that Bassanio's voyage from Venice to Belmont is via the Straits of Messina and Genoa. The other journeys between these two places made by Salerio, Lorenzo, Portia, etc., were all by land along the main east and west road across northern Italy. The interesting point is that the routes taken by the various characters in the

play resemble that followed by Oxford in the summer of 1575. He left Venice in a Venetian galley about May or June; travelled via the Straits of Messina, Palermo and Rome; disembarked at Genoa in September, and returned to Venice overland. Admiral Holland, in his article in *The Shakespeare Pictorial* for October 1934, has not only succeeded in solving the location of Belmont, but he has also made a perfectly straightforward time-analysis of the play, which has up to now baffled all orthodox commentators.

The Merry Wives of Windsor (II, ii)

Allen refers to "concealed word play" by Oxford. Ford appears disguised as Master Brook:

FALS. I do begin to perceive, that I am made an Ass.
FORD. Aye, and an Ox too: both the proofs are extant.

The second line of which brings the words "Ford," "Ox" and "proofs" into a conjunction that in the light of what has gone before is, to say the least of it, remarkable.

Again:

. As for Fenton, he is pure Oxford, as witness the talk concerning him between Host and Page in III, ii:

Host. What say you to young Master Fenton? He capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth. He writes verses, he speaks holiday, he smells April and May:

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he will carry't; he will carry't; 'tis in his buttons,
he will carry't.

PAGE. Not by my consent, I promise you. The gentleman is of no having. He kept company with the wild prince and Poins. He is of too high a region, he knows too much.

Here every detail fits Oxford, including even the phrase "He smells April and May," since the seventeenth Earl was born on April 12, and introduced perfumed gloves into England when he returned from Italy in 1576.

7

INSTANCES OF SELF-DRAMATISATION: "ALL'S
WELL THAT ENDS WELL"; "HAMLET"

All's Well that Ends Well

The character of Bertram in this play is selected by Mr. Looney as an instance of self-dramatisation by Edward de Vere.

Bertram, a young lord of ancient lineage, of which he is proud, having lost a father for whom he entertained a strong affection, is brought to Court by his mother and there left *as a royal ward to be brought up under royal supervision.*

As he grows up he asks *for military service* and to be allowed *to travel*, but is repeatedly refused or put off. *At last he leaves without permission.*

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Before leaving he had been married to a young woman with whom *he had been brought up*, and who had *herself been most active* in bringing about the marriage.

Matrimonial troubles are associated with both his travels abroad and his return home.

This is as near to autobiography as a dramatist could permit himself to go.

Mr. Allen writes:

That Oxford is Bertram in the comedy, as surely as he is the Prince of Denmark in the tragedy, the opening lines of *All's Well* at once indicate.

COUNTESS. In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband.

BERTRAM. And in going, Madam, I weep o'er my father's death anew; but I must attend His Majesty's command, to whom I am now in ward, evermore in subjection.

Here you have not merely the "second husband" motive, in the King's relation to the Countess, but also a young royal ward, her son, weeping anew his father's death precisely as Oxford had done, when, as ward of Queen Elizabeth, he also "mourned a parent lost."

Act III, ii, above quoted, opens with the following significant dialogue:

CLOWN. By my troth, I take the young lord (Bertram) to be a very melancholy man.

COURT. By what observance, I pray you?

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CLOWN. Why, he will look upon his boot and sing;
mend the ruff and sing; pick his teeth and sing.
I know a man that had this trick of melancholy
sold a goodly manor for a song.

This description parallels exactly, as Mr. Allen points out, with his melancholy Jaques—Oxford in *As You Like It*, who in IV, iii, is mentioned as having sold his own lands “that he might see other men’s,” which the young Earl actually did in 1575.

Hamlet

The authentic edition of this play, published in Q 2 1604, the year of his death, tends to show that Edward de Vere revealed the circumstances of his outward life, as well as the disturbances of mind and spirit of his inner life, in the character of Hamlet. Says Professor Slater: “My own opinion is, that Oxford’s authorship in *Hamlet* is practically proved. *Hamlet* is as autobiographical as *David Copperfield*, and the Prince of Denmark is the author’s masterpiece and self-portrait.”

Mr. Allen states the case strongly in *The Life Story*, p. 20. As also does Mr. Looney, p. 457:

(V, i)

HAM. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

FIRST CLOWN. Of all the days i’ the year, I came to’t
the day that our last King Hamlet o’ercame
Fortinbras.

HAM. How long is that since?

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FIRST C. Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that; it was that very day that young Hamlet was born: he that is mad and sent into England.

HAM. Ay marry, why was he sent into England?
. . . Upon what ground?

FIRST C. Why here in Denmark I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Mr. Allen writes (p. 327):

These are significant words, because if we may for Denmark and Norway read England and Scotland—and Scotland was in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote *Hamlet*—the grave-digger's words mean that he has been practising his vocation since 1550, the year in which, during the reign of "our last King," Edward VI, peace was declared between the two countries, on April 1, and, as the clown further tells us, that he has been "sexton here, man and boy, thirty years," *the date on which he is speaking is 1580, when Oxford-Hamlet, born on April 12, 1550, was thirty years old.* The year 1580, therefore, may be taken as a key date for the play; though other allusions tend to bring the year forward a little into the fifteen-'eighties, since the clown's reference to the skull of Yorick, the King's jester, as having "lain in the earth three and twenty years" points almost certainly to Will Somers, jester to King Henry VIII, who died in 1560, thus giving us not 1580 but 1583 as the year in which the clown was speaking. Other considerations confirm that year; as, for example, Marcellus' words concerning "the impress of shipwrights," etc., a probable allusion to

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the Royal Commission of 1583 to report on the state of the Navy in view of the threatened Spanish invasion, which actually came in 1588.

Admiral Holland writes :

Referring to Hamlet's remark, "the time is out of joint," perhaps the most noteworthy incident is one which occurred at the end of 1582, namely the change on the Continent from the Julian to the Gregorian Calendar. The confusion which would ensue from this can well be imagined: England keeping one date, the Continent being ten days different.

Admiral Holland comments :

Polonius in his instructions to Reynolds (II, i) to spy on Laertes, mentions "falling out at tennis" as an example of the "slight sullies" he is to lay on his son. When Sir Philip Sidney (after the tennis court quarrel) challenged the Earl, and the Queen forbade the duel, the reason she gave to Sir Philip was as follows :

"She pointed out the difference in degrees between Earls and Gentlemen, the respect inferiors owed to superiors, and how the Gentleman's neglect of the Nobility taught the *peasant* to insult both." This occurred rather more than three years before *Hamlet* was written. Now note Hamlet's remark in Act V, i :

"By the Lord, Horatio, this *three years* I have taken note of it: the age is grown so picked that the toe of the *peasant* comes so near the heel of the courtier he galls his kibe."

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He actually makes use of the same word "peasant" as the Queen used, and mentions the time that elapsed—three years—since the incident occurred.

The reference to the King's jester, Will Somers, who died in 1560, when Oxford was ten, as Yorick, is probably personal:

HAMLET. Alas! poor Yorick! I knew him well,
Horatio. A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times.

Yorick may well have amused Oxford as a boy.

The driving force of the play is father-worship:

He was a man; take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Whereas disappointment at his mother's conduct forms part of the tragedy of Hamlet's life, a situation which is not without parallel in the life of Edward de Vere.

Both Hamlet and de Vere have common interests in the drama, and are high-born patrons of companies of actors.

Hamlet expresses his musical feeling. De Vere was himself a musician.

Hamlet shows interest in Italy, and evinces a desire to travel. Is opposed by his mother and father. De Vere's case is analogous.

His unrealised ambition for a military vocation

is indicated in the final scene, and there is record of his participation in an actual sea-fight—compare de Vere and the Armada. The Chief Minister at the Court of Denmark is Polonius, that of England, Burghley; and the identification of the latter as Polonius is generally accepted. The worldly-wise maxims bestowed on his son, Laertes, are similar to those laid down by Burghley for his favourite son (Thomas Cecil).

With Burghley as Polonius, it follows that de Vere, his ward, is Hamlet; and Anne Cecil, whom he married, becomes Ophelia; for though the marriage of the latter did not take place, it received the royal sanction. Horatio can be no other than de Vere's favourite cousin, Sir Horace. Colonel Ward finds that Francisco, the sentinel, is suggested by Sir Francis de Vere, who had recently returned from the Netherlands after twenty years' service; and to whom, by his last recorded act, Edward de Vere left the custody and stewardship of the forest of Essex. Francisco's name is not in the Quarto of 1603; and in that of 1604 he says in one of his speeches:

For this *relief* much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold
And I am *sick at heart*.

Thus expressing, indirectly, his feelings after his return, depressed and wounded, and thankful to be relieved of his command, by Sir Horace, his brother.

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Sir Clements Markham writes that, when in 1604 James I made a treaty with Spain, "No one felt the shame more deeply than Sir Francis de Vere. . . . He was General in Command of the English troops in the pay of the States, with enlarged powers, enjoying the confidence and friendship of Prince Maurice and Barneveldt . . . but his health was failing. He was covered with wounds and riddled with bullets. . . . He knew that his younger brother Horace would ably fill his place" (p. 345).

Colonel Ward suggests that Prince Maurice and Barneveldt are represented by Marcellus and Bernardo: and in a German version of *Hamlet* published in Hamburg in 1778, the name Bernefeld is substituted for Bernardo. The latter apparently relieves Francisco of his duties, and shares the watch with Marcellus and Horatio, who as Sir Horace, was to carry on the work of Sir Francis on his retirement.

Again, Hamlet's appeal in the Quarto of 1604:

O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind

becomes

O, good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown shall live behind me,

thus diminishing the reality of the dying appeal that follows:

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If thou did'st ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.

This passage finds reflection in Edward de Vere's verses on the loss of his good name, published between 1576 and 1578, and his retirement in 1588:

Fram'd in the front of forlorn hope past all recovery,
I stayless stand to abide the shock of shame and
infamy.

.

My sprites, my heart, my wit and force in deep distress
are drown'd,
The only loss of my good name is of those griefs the
ground.

.

Help crave I must, and crave I will, with tears upon
my face
Of all that may in heaven or hell, in earth or air be
found,
To wail with me this loss of mine, as of those griefs
the ground.

The final appeal of *Hamlet* was not merely an utterance of the Hamlet of the play, but a dramatic self-revelation by the author, asking for reparation and justice to his memory; and appealing to his friend to report him and his "cause aright to the unsatisfied."

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If it be accepted, as well it may, that these words were addressed by Edward de Vere (Hamlet) to his cousin Sir Horace (Horatio), they bear their full significance. Edward de Vere for some time previous to 1604 had been failing in health, and possibly had realised a warning that his days were numbered. This premonition is shown in such sonnets, written about that time, as:

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly, sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell.

72

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs that shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west:
Which by and by black night doth take away
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

The following inferences are reasonable:

1. That the evidence of the life, education and accomplishments of Edward de Vere point to a personality which can be identified as "Shakespeare."

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2. That Oxford was the part author of *Venus* and *Lucrece*, and dedicated them to Southampton, as the "first heire of mine 'invention,'" i.e. invented pseudonym "Shakespeare."

3. That the poems, sonnets and plays were written previously to the death of Edward de Vere in 1604, excepting certain plays which were left unfinished. Others are found to be spurious imitations.

4. That the publication of *authentic* plays ceased in 1604, the year of the death of Edward de Vere.

5. That the admitted resemblance between the plays of Lyly and those of "the poet Shaksepeare" is explained by the influence and assistance derived by Lyly from the Earl of Oxford.

6. That some of the Shakespearean plays were written in collaboration by a "Group," of which Oxford was the "Master Mind."

CHAPTER V

THE EVIDENCE OF THE "SONNETS"

ON May 20, 1609, Shakespeare's *Sonnets* were entered on the Stationers' Register, and soon after published by Thomas Thorpe, under the title of *Shake-Speares Sonnets*, without the permission of the author, or any subsequent protest by the latter, either as regards the procuring of the manuscript or its publication.

The *Sonnets* contained the following dedication:

TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .
THESE . INSUING . SONNETS
MR. W . H . ALL . HAPPINESSE .
AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .
PROMISED .
BY .
OUR . EVER-LIVING . POET
WISHETH .
THE . WELL-WISHING .
ADVENTURER . IN .
SETTING .
FORTH .

T. T.

Many conjectures have been hazarded as to the identity of "Mr. W. H.," the principal being that the initials represent either William Herbert,

Earl of Pembroke, or (inverted) Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton.

But it is incredible that an obscure publisher, such as Thorpe, could have known the name of the nobleman, or other person, by whom the *Sonnets* were inspired, and would thus have identified him in a pirated edition of these poems. The idea that this dedication refers to "the Fair Youth" of the *Sonnets* can be definitely abandoned.

Mrs. Stopes pointed out that the verb "to beget" is here used in the sense of "to get" or "to acquire"; and Sir Sidney Lee identified William Hall as an obscure stationer and friend in the trade of Thorpe, who, like the latter, was filling the irresponsible rôle of procurer of manuscripts. The coincident collocation of letters of "Mr. W. H. All" is suggestive and typical of Thorpe, who in a previous dedication to Edward Blount had written, "Blunt I purpose to be blunt with you." Mrs. Stopes considered that the dedication expressed the idea of a wedding wish connected with the marriage of William Hall.

The line, "our ever-living poet," can only refer to a man no longer alive. Colonel Ward, over a period of three hundred years, found only one example referring to an individual that is not a divine being:

That ever-living man of memory,
Henry the Fifth.

1 *Henry VI*, Act IV, iii.

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If used in this sense in connection with a living man, the use is in a sense unknown to English literature.

Having accepted "W. H." as William Hall, it was desirable to find the church in which he was married, and his place of residence; and thus, if possible, trace his discovery of the *Sonnets*. There was no clue of any kind; and all the churches in England were before Colonel Ward as a field of selection. He was aware that Edward de Vere had lived and died (1604) in King's Place, Hackney; that in 1609 the Countess had completed the sale of the property to Fulke Greville; and it struck him as curious that, though publications of plays had ceased in 1604 on the death of Oxford, three spurious plays and the *Sonnets* should have been published during the years 1608-09, when affairs were being wound up, and King's Place made ready for evacuation. He decided, therefore, to commence with the Parish Church at Hackney; and found forthwith that "*William Hall and Margery Gryffyn were joyned in matrimonye on the fourth August 1608,*" *nine months before the publication of the "Sonnets."* This discovery was no fortuitous coincidence, but a result directly emerging from the Oxford hypothesis, and one which led to consequent inferences. It showed that Sir Sidney Lee had rightly identified William Hall, and that Mrs. Stopes was correct in her interpretation of the wedding wish; further, that

there was a probability that Hall had surreptitiously procured the *Sonnets* from King's Place; and that Edward de Vere was the author, and "ever-living poet" of the dedication. Evidently, the same William Hall had procured for publication, no doubt also from King's Place, in 1606, *The Fourfold Meditation*, by Oxford's cousin, Philip, Earl of Arundel. "A mere accident," he says, "conveyed them to my hands," as a similar "accident" possibly "conveyed the *Sonnets*." It was found that Margaret Gryffyn was the daughter of Edward Gryffyn, a scrivener of Southwark, whose name occurs frequently in the Henslowe papers, and who belonged to the same underworld fraternity as Thorpe and Hall. Chambers rejects, for reasons that seem inadequate, Sidney Lee's theory, supported as it is by Begley. In his article on Thomas Thorpe, Lee wrote:

As in the case of Marlowe's *Lucan*, Thomas Thorpe selected for patron of the volume a friend in the trade whom he denominated "Mr. W. H." . . . An obscure stationer, William Hall, was at this period filling, like Thorpe, the irresponsible rôle of procurer of manuscripts. In 1606 Hall had procured for publication *A Foure-fold Meditation*, by Robert Southwell, and had supplied, as owner of the "copy," a dedicatory epistle under his initials "W. H." Southwell's poem was printed for Hall by George Eld, the printer of the *Sonnets*.

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Chambers' objections are based on "the commonness of the initials W. H. and the name Hall," and the "humour in the notion of Thorpe's dedicating the volume to a printer whom he had not employed." The initials W. H. may, or may not, have been more common than others; but it is doubtful whether in a population of perhaps 200,000 there were many Halls in the stationery and printing business, who decided to get married shortly before the publication of the *Sonnets*. If the marriage entry is regarded as relevant, Colonel Ward made certain that there was only one possible William Hall. We do not know the terms of the transfer of the *Sonnets* to Thorpe, nor what passed in the matter of the printing contract, but it is significant that the printer of the *Sonnets* was George Eld, *who had been employed by Hall himself*. Hall and Thorpe were apparently "birds of a feather" and friends.

According to Chambers (p. 566), S. Lee not only identified "Mr. W. H." as William Hall, the obscure stationer and printer, "but gave a blessing to a further assumption that this was also a William Hall, *who married at Hackney in 1608*, and might therefore be congratulated on the birth of a child in 1609." It has been shown above with certainty that the marriage entry of William Hall in Hackney Church was discovered by Colonel Ward entirely owing to his adoption of the Oxford hypothesis. Lee's so-called "blessing,"

therefore, can only be regarded as a significant admission.

Chambers omits notice of two important points: (1) that the entry in Hackney Church was found solely through the clue afforded by the Oxford connection with Hackney; and (2) that the term "ever-living poet" can only apply to a man no longer alive.

The Foure-fold Meditation was not written by Southwell, but by Oxford's cousin, Philip, Earl of Arundel, a difference which is relevant to the Oxford theory.

Mr. Allen cites Mr. H. J. L. Robbie, author of an article in *The Review of English Studies*, April, 1929, who proves that the *Meditations* were not written by Southwell but by the Earl of Arundel.

The Foure-fold Meditation was therefore given to the world by an unscrupulous stationer, who unblushingly admitted that his edition was pirated and even sought commendation for that very reason. He ascribed it to Robert Southwell, a notorious Jesuit, whose literary work was famous and much applauded.

Says Dr. Rendall (p. 295):

It is hard to understand how the *entire* collection can have been in any private hands, except those of the actual author. Censorship of the press was at this period under strict and vigilant control: it would not have been easy to produce a pirated edition during the author's lifetime without his

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leave or his connivance. The natural inference is that in 1609 the author was either dead, or else unable to exercise control. Much speaks in favour of posthumous publication. In the dedication itself "Our Ever-Living Poet" is far more appropriate to one who had passed from earthly life. . . . Nor is it easy to discover, or even imagine, a motive for publication in the author's lifetime. As poetry, they were not of a kind to enhance his reputation or command a large market. There was much in them to compromise, and to give a handle to critics or to enemies.

Dr. Rendall has shown (*Shakespeare: Handwriting and Spelling*, 1931) that the peculiarities of Shakespeare's handwriting are to be found in the *Sonnets*, which were certainly printed from the author's MSS. The Earl of Oxford's handwriting is well known; and "every turn and habit characteristic of de Vere finds counterpart in the Quarto of these poems."

In *Shakespeare's Sonnets* he brings the wealth of his erudition and scholarship to prove that the *Sonnets* were inspired by the inner life and personality of de Vere: "Read in this guiding light they become from end to end coherent and psychologically luminous; for myself—it has not merely made dark places plain, but has enriched them a hundredfold. . . ."

Even if here and there our *interpretations* may be questioned, our survey has sufficed to show how

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central, and how catholic, a place the Earl of Oxford holds among the literary circles and activities of the Elizabethan age. A Philip Sidney or a Francis Bacon may have stepped more prominently into the lime-light, but no figure gathered to itself the like variety and range of skilled appreciation; and, evidently, more striking still are the testimonies which, after his decease, Munday and, above all, Geo. Chapman, accorded to his memory. Where can the like be found? During the latter years of creative output, like Moses on the Mount, he "entered into the midst of the cloud," and resolutely wrapped its folds about him. Contemporaries bear witness that he jealously screened the secret of authorship, and posterity was content to believe that all his handiwork passed with him to a nameless grave. Another alternative is open; that the cloak used to mask his identity in life has also availed to baffle the eyes of posterity. And our study of the *Sonnets* will show how many lines of evidence converge upon the personality of the seventeenth Earl of Oxford.

Dr. Rendall begins with an analytical survey of the biography of Oxford, and passes on to a scrutiny of the *Sonnets*, quoting parallel passages in the plays, and references personal to him. Mr. Allen also quotes many personal references.

A selection of these is given:

Sonnet 59

If there be nothing new, but that which is,
Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,

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Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
The second burthen of a former child?
*O, that record could with a backward look
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done.*
That I might see what the old world would say
To this composed wonder of your frame:
Whether we are mended, or whether better they,
Or whether revolution be the same.
O, sure I am, the wits of former days
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

Mr. Allen here finds undeniable proof that Edward de Vere was the author of the *Sonnets*. In the eleventh century his ancestor, Aubrey de Vere, became, in the first crusade, the central figure of the following legend:

In the year of our Lord, 1098, Corborant, Admiral of the Soudan of Perce (*i.e.* Soldan or Sultan of Persia), was fought with at Antioch, and discomfited by the Christianes. The night cumming on yn the chace of this Bataile, and waxing dark, the Christianes being 4 miles from Antioch, God willing the sauftie of the Christianes, shewed a white starre or molette of fyve pointes on the Christian Host, which to every mannes sighte did lighte and arrest upon the standard of Albry (Aubrey), their shyning excessively.

That star, or mullet, was incorporated into the heraldic arms of the de Veres. He proceeds:

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The phrase, "five hundred courses of the sun," sent my mind back to the crusades; it flashed upon me that 1598, being almost certainly the date of this sonnet—as it was certainly the date of Chapman's poems commenting upon these very verses—a "backward look" of five hundred years, would give 1098, the precise year in which the star hung over the banner of Aubrey de Vere . . . I saw . . . that Oxford . . . was comparing the present with the past, and in such lines as:

"Whether we are mended, or whether better they,
Or whether revolution be the same——"

was simply speculating, as to whether his great-ancestors . . . were really better men than himself. . . . I was alert for further references to the star and boar, motives from the Oxford coat of arms . . . and found them both:

"Till whatsoever star that guides my moving
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,"

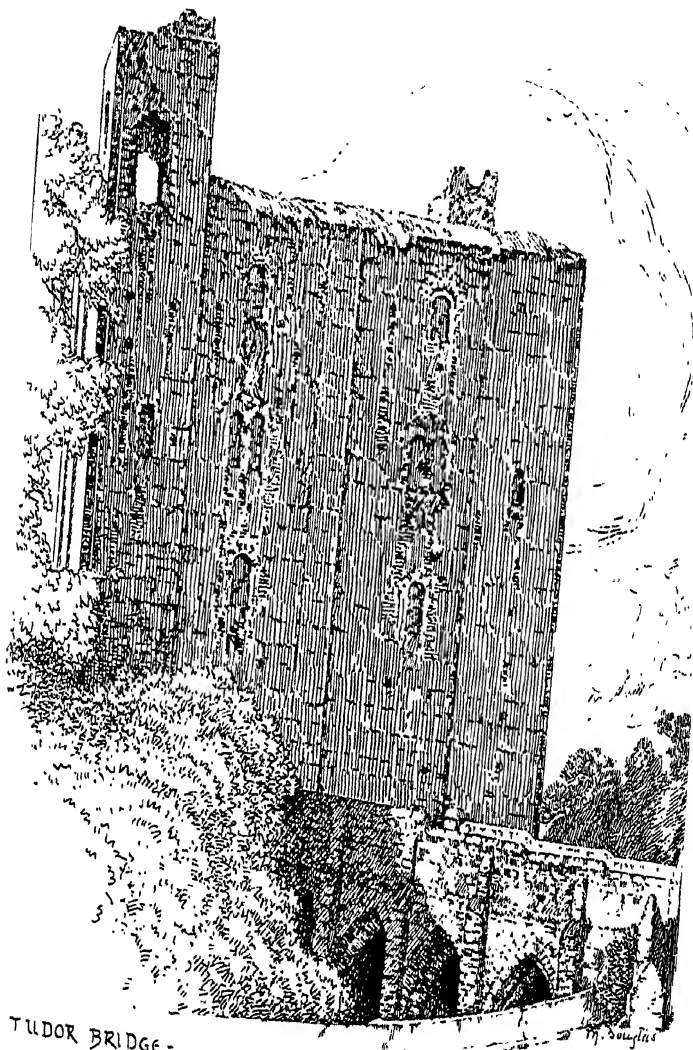
and

"Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own
heart,"

which is about as plain a reference as one could wish. . . . The matter, therefore, is perfectly clear.

Sonnet 74

Dr. Rendall sees in this sonnet the longing for anonymous survival, which constitutes the riddle



TUDOR BRIDGE -
BUILT BY THE 13th EARL

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of Shakespearean authorship, and which was evident in Edward de Vere. That his verse should survive is, as it were, a dying charge:

. . . When that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line (verses) some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.

But yet

My name be buried where my body is. (S. 72)

Also

I, once gone, to all the world must die. (S. 81)
Do not so much as *my poor name rehearse*. (S. 71)

Sonnet 76

Why write I still all one E.VER the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed [disguise].
That E.VERY word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth and where they did proceed?

Dr. Rendall points out that this word-play was characteristic of the period, and was frequently made use of by Oxford. His name was "lineally drawn from the village of Ver near to Bayeux in Normandy."

In his early *Echoe Verses*, which have unmistakable correspondences with the *Venus and Adonis* stanzas, we read:

Oh Heavens! who was the first that bred in me this
fever? Vere.

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Who was the first that gave the wound whose fear I
wear for ever? Vere.

What tyrant, Cupid, to my harm usurps thy golden
quiver? Vere.

What wight first caught this heart and can from
bondage it deliver? Vere.¹

While *Vere* in its sense of "truly" is openly
played on in S. 82:

Thou *truly fair* were *truly* sympathised
In *true* plain words by thy *true*-telling friend,

and the reiterated emphasis on True and Truth,
as in S. 62:

Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,
No shape *so true*, no *truth of such account*,

seems to glance at the proud *Vero nil verius* motto.

Sonnet 91

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force ;
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill ;
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their
horse ;

.

Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Or more delight than hawks or horses be.

¹ In the Rawlinson manuscript the spelling is "feavere," "ever,"
"quivere," and "delivere."

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Dr. Rendall writes: "The goals and prizes of ambition here enumerated are precisely those on which Lord Oxford's youthful aspirations had centred—no biographer could sum them up more perfectly."

Sonnet 105

A GOD IN LOVE

The opening phrase of *Sonnet 105* is interesting:

Let not my love be called idolatry

as the probable original of Ben Jonson's "I lov'd the man, and do honour to his memory on this side idolatry as much as any." His familiarity with the *Sonnets* is clear in his tributary lines prefixed to the First Folio:

Sonnet 111

O! for my sake do you with Fortune chide
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand.

This is a reference to the sum of £1,000 a year, paid from the Secret Service Fund to Oxford "during Her Majesty's pleasure," for some State service rendered by him:

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Sonnet 122

Thy *gift*, thy *tables*, are within my brain
Full character'd with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain,
Beyond all date, even to eternity:
Or, at the least, so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist;
Till each to raz'd oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be miss'd.
That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I *tallies* thy dear love to score;
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
To trust those *tables* that receive thee more:
 To keep an adjunct to remember thee
 Were to import forgetfulness in me.

At the tournament held in May, 1572, the Earl of Oxford gained the highest award, and was given a tablet of diamonds by the Queen. Mrs. Clark writes: "The terms 'Tablet,' 'tables,' 'tallies,' are all designations for the same article—a small memorandum book or score-pad, which, being jewelled, would naturally be quite small. To whom, if not Queen Elizabeth, could these lines refer?"

Sonnet 125

Wer't aught to me *I bore the canopy*,
With my extern the outward honouring?
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which prove more short than waste or ruining?

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The bearing of the canopy was probably the proudest privilege of the de Veres on great historic occasions, such especially as the Coronation.

And the Earl of Oxford, as Lord Chamberlain, had borne it recently over the head of the Queen on the occasion of the Armada Victory celebration in St. Paul's Cathedral on November 24, 1588.

Sonnet 136

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy "Will,"
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;
Thus far for love, my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.
"Will" will fulfil the treasure of thy love,
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.

.

Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me,—for my name is "Will."

This sonnet is often referred to as proving that William Shakspeare of Stratford must have been the poet, since he tells us clearly that his name is "Will."

Mr. Allen shows the fallacy of this view, thus :

In previous sonnets, such as those concerning "the canopy" and "the star," we have seen the poet historically identifying himself in a manner so plain, as seemingly to be beyond discussion, and to draw from himself the instant admission that he has, in fact, given away his name. The word "Will,"

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moreover, is invariably printed either in italics or in inverted commas, a most significant fact, which the advocates of the orthodox view-point usually think it prudent to overlook.

It is quite evident that "Will" is not the poet's real name, but a pseudonym; and the secret of his identity lies hidden in the text, not only of the *Sonnets*, but of the plays and poems, written by Edward de Vere.

It is certain that the author of the *Sonnets* had passed the meridian of life, as suggested by:

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow. (S. 2)

Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best.

(S. 138)

Edward de Vere was forty in 1590, when the *Sonnets* were perhaps commenced. Shakspeare of Stratford does not qualify. He was twenty-six in that year, and only thirty-one in 1595, the year preferred by Chambers. The refrain throughout suggests the mentor, who had "withered and agonised"; who had suffered by the discipline of disappointment, and the loss of friends; who is counselling a younger man, moving in the same sphere, with the journey of life before him. Chambers writes of this:

The *Sonnets* give us glimpses of a soul-side of Shakespeare imperfectly revealed in the plays. A

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perturbed spirit is behind the quiet mask. Here is record of misplaced or thwarted affections, of imperfections and disabilities, inseparable, perhaps, from the undesired way of life. . . . He is tired of life before his time, conscious of "tanned antiquity" in the full tide of years, brooding over the decay of beauty and the passing of friends, letting his imagination play freely round the thoughts of death. . . . There is some disharmony between the tone of the *Sonnets* and that of the vivid comedies; they lead more naturally to the questionings of Hamlet.

He does not pause to explain how these conditions accord with the life of the actor, and busy maltster of Stratford, during the critical years of 1595-1604, when in the full tide of his prosperity. Whereas, in the case of Edward de Vere, their significance would seem to be almost biographical. He had retired from public life in 1588 in dejection at "the loss of his good name," had remained a recluse, absorbed in literature until the year of his death, 1604; and the strain of sadness which pervades his own poems, and the *Sonnets*, is in accord with his life-history.

The following circumstances point to Edward de Vere as the author of the *Sonnets*:

1. They were published as *Shake-speare's Sonnets*, without the sanction of the poet; and yet no protest was made. The obvious inference remains that the poet was no longer alive.

2. The registration of the marriage of William

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Hall in Hackney Church was found solely owing to the clue afforded by the residence of the Earl and Countess of Oxford at Hackney; and it is practically certain that the *Sonnets* were obtained from Brook House.

3. The line "Ever-living poet" referring to the author of the *Sonnets*, implies that he had passed from earthly life.

4. The *Sonnets* contain a number of references directly personal to Edward de Vere, and find their inspiration in the circumstances of his life-history.

CYPHERS

Mr. B. G. Theobald, in an interesting book, *Shake-speare's Sonnets Unmasked*, claimed that the dedication was a Baconian cypher. (S being A = 1, etc., R.Z = 1, etc., and K a combination A = 27, B = 28 to I.J = 35. Thereafter, K = 10, L = 11 to Z.) References to Francis Bacon were traced in the first five lines, which, seeing that three cyphers were used, is not remarkable. The seventh, or crucial line,

Our Ever-living poet,

failed to respond satisfactorily to the cyphers. Colonel B. R. Ward thereon, finding that the line was K = 376, showed the equivalent to be

The Earle of Oxford.

But these results pale before those produced by F. W. D., "using either a direct solution from one cypher result to the same cypher, or else K as the master cypher, and the results used in another cypher." Referring to the lines of the dedication:

Of these Sugred Sonnets for his private friends (K476 to S476). The Earle of Southampton (S244 to S244). The Earle of Darby (R237 to R237). Francis Bacon Knight (S166 to S166). Shakespeare (K172 to S172). Alias (K51 to S51). The Earle of Oxford (our ever-living poet) (K376 to K376). Edward de Vere (K192 to R192). Marlowe Greene Lyly (K347 to K347). Shakespeare saye was writer (K273 to S273). On their honour (K154 to R154), faith and (R61 to R61), belief (K38 to S38).

An expert states that the number of solutions which can be evolved from such a cypher combination is merely limited by effort; and "cross cyphers are not valid." (Akin, perhaps, to "body-line bowling.") We leave it at that. The Oxford hypothesis, states a reviewer, is strong enough without resort to such doubtful expedients.

CHAPTER VI

THE EVIDENCE OF THE FIRST FOLIO

THE atmosphere of mystery that surrounds the life and work of Shakespeare extends also to the compilation of the First Folio, or first collection of his plays in one volume. The book contains thirty-six plays, fifteen previously published, and twenty-one up till then unpublished; and, as already stated, much of the work described as "Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, published according to the True and Originall Copies," is not by "Shakespeare."

Plays were included which Shakespeare had only revised, or in which he had collaborated, or to some extent contributed. Many plays were no doubt rejected, *Pericles* among them; but there was considerable latitude in selection. There are 908 pages in all. The price may have been about £1 (£10 present value), and according to Dr. Greg, a sale of less than 1,000 copies would hardly have repaid the publishers, unless "the Incomparable Paire of Brethren," the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, to whom the Folio was dedicated, showed munificence. The book was "Printed at the Charges of W. Jaggard, Ed. Blount, I, Smith-Weeke, and W. Apsley,

1623." Isaac Jaggard succeeded his father, who died November, 1623. The order in the British Museum copy is as follows:

- (a) Verses to the Reader on the Portrait, by Ben Jonson.
- (b) The Title-Page and portrait on an inserted leaf.
- (c) An epistle to the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, by the Actors Heminges and Condell.
- (d) An Epistle to the readers, by the same.
- (e) Commendatory Verses, by Ben Jonson and Hugh Holland.
- (f) A "Catalogue" of the Plays, from which *Troilus and Cressida* is omitted.
- (g) Commendatory Verses by Leonard Digges, and an unknown I.M.
- (h) A head-title and "The names of the Principall Actors in all these Playes."

(a) and (b) The Portrait, or Droeshout engraving, is admittedly "a fake." "It really looks as if Sir E. Durning-Lawrence was right in saying that the artist has (purposely or not) represented the jacket, or 'jerkin' as made up of two left-hand sides put together, one of them 'hind-side before.' The face too, if carefully examined, *does* look very like a *mask*." (Greenwood, p. 396.) Yet, writes Ben Jonson,

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To the Reader

This figure that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Graver had a strife
With nature, to out-doo the life;
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that was ever writ in brasse.
But since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not in his Picture, but his Booke.

B. I.

Colonel Ward (p. 58) comments: "Sceptical readers suspect a double meaning in the words 'out-doo' in the fourth line and 'hit' in the sixth. To 'out-doo the life' may mean to destroy the life; and 'hit' is an old form of the word 'hid,' so that Ben Jonson may all the time be congratulating Martin Droeshout on having so successfully destroyed the life, and concealed the features of the Earl of Oxford" (behind *the mask*).

(c) An Epistle to the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery by the Actors Heminges and Condell (extracts):

But since your L. L. have been pleas'd to think these trifles something heeretofore; and have prosequuted both them, and their Author living with so much favour; we hope that (they outliving him, and he not having the fate common with some to be executor



THE WELBECK PORTRAIT OF
EDWARD DE VERE THE SEVENTEENTH EARL OF OXFORD
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THE ASHBORNE PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE

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to his owne writings) you will use the like indulger toward them you have done unto their parent. . .

We have but collected them, and done an off to the dead to procure his Orphanes guardians.

(*d*) *An Epistle* to the Readers, by the sa (extracts):

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to ha bene wished, that the Author himselfe *had liv'd have set forth, and overseen his owne writings*: But sir it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by de departed from that right, we pray you do not en his Friends, the office of their care and paine, have collected and published them, . . . as who (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, a surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed, by t frauds and stealths of injurious imposters, that expo them; even those, are now offer'd to your vi cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the re absolute in their numbers as he conceived them. . .

His mind and hand went together; and what thought he uttered with that easinesse, that wee h scarce received from him a blot in his papers.

It should be noted that "the Incomparat Paire of Brethren," the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, to whom the Folio was dedicate were both connected with the Earl of Oxford. Susan, Countess of Montgomery, was the Ea of Oxford's youngest daughter; while Bridg another daughter, had been at one time engag to the Earl of Pembroke.

Further, there can be no reasonable doubt that Ben Jonson wrote both the dedication and the epistle. "These worthy Players," themselves wholly unused to composition, "did no more than lend their names." (Greenwood, p. 384.)

There is ample controversy regarding the sources from which the plays were printed, and the probability of Shakespeare's original manuscript being available. The opinion of the Cambridge Editors is as follows (Greenwood, p. 418):

The natural inference to be drawn from this statement (in the above epistle) is that all the separate editions of Shakespeare's plays were "stolen," "surreptitious," and "imperfect," and that all those published in the Folio were printed from the author's own manuscript. But, it can be proved to demonstration, that several of the plays in the Folio were printed from earlier quarto editions, and that in other cases the quarto is more correctly printed, or from a better manuscript, than the Folio text. . . .

"Some of the plays may have been printed, not from Shakespeare's own manuscripts, but from manuscripts made from them for the use of the theatre." The Cambridge Editors suggest that there was no intention to deceive, but the writers lacked practice in composition and endeavoured to write a smart preface. "Or the Preface may have been written *by some literary man* in the employment of the publishers, and merely

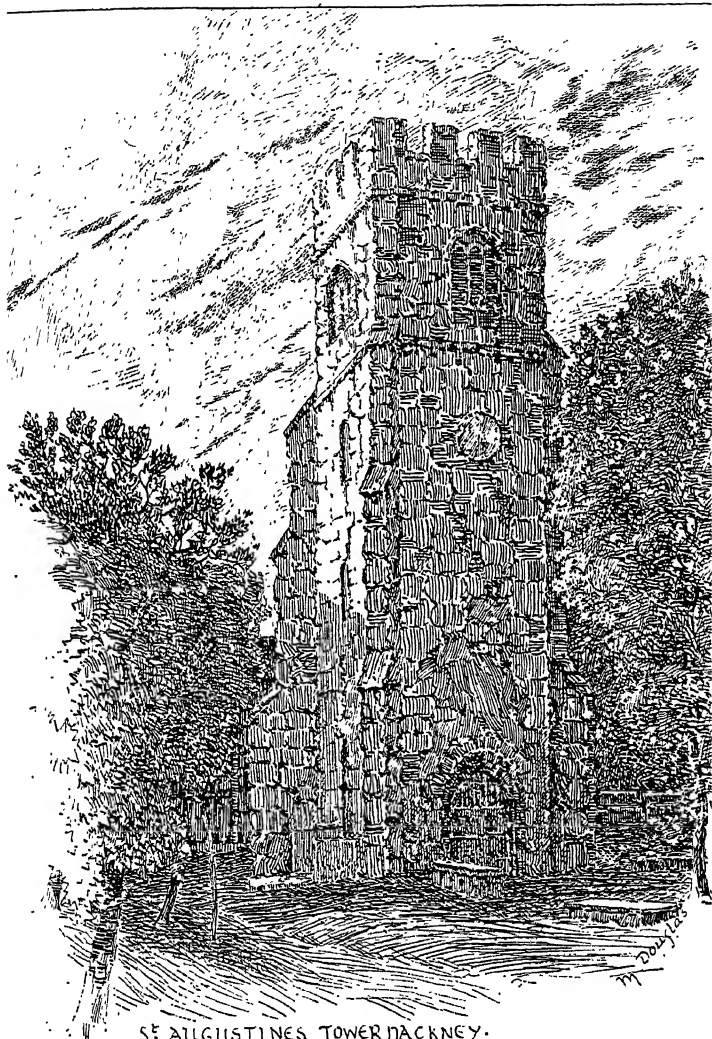
signed by the two players." Says Greenwood: "On this excellent statement I have only to remark that 'Want of practice in composition' would hardly account for the statement as a fact of what the writers must have known to be untrue; but no doubt the solution of the difficulty lies in the suggestion that the *Preface was written by a literary man.*"

With reference to the sentence "Wee scarce have received from him a blot in his papers," Greenwood says, "But we now know that this statement is ridiculous; that if the players had any unblotted manuscripts in their hands (which is by no means probable) they were merely 'Fair Copies'; that if they really thought that the author of the plays wrote them off *currente calamo* and never blotted a line, never revised, never made any alterations, they knew nothing whatever concerning the real Shakespeare." Ben Jonson could have given the authority for the text in the case of each play, whether quarto, transcripts, autographs or fair copies of the latter; but he was engaged to write a good advertisement; and, as will be shown later, was nearer the truth than is at first apparent.

Again "The Players (or Ben Jonson for them) state that Shakespeare had during his lifetime the 'right to publish his plays,' and the epistle dedicatory . . . refers to 'the Author' in terms which imply that had he not been removed by

death, he might and would have been 'Executor to his own writings.'" This is contrary to the view of Sidney Lee, who states that the manuscript passed into the hands of "the Company" and "it was contrary to custom for dramatists to preserve their own manuscripts." Professor Pollard dissents. "Despite Mr. Lee's confident assertion, the idea that these trifles might one day 'come in useful' is one which might surely have occurred to the thrifty nature of Shakespeare himself, quite apart from any question of parental pride."

If Shakspeare, a shrewd business man, retained his manuscripts, what became of them? The Players even were anxious "to procure his Orphans guardians." But where were "the Orphans" in 1616 when Shakspeare died? Greenwood writes (p. 437): "But these priceless manuscripts preserved by Shakspeare (of Stratford) as the supposition now is, disappear for ever 'into the night—into the night,' and are no more seen! Nay, in truth and in fact, according to all the evidence that we have, it would appear that the immortal poet (if 'Will' were he) died without book or manuscript in his possession." It is explained that there is no reason why Books or Manuscripts should have been mentioned in the will, unless a special bequest were made; but the library and manuscripts of the author Shakespeare would surely be of sufficient value to



ST. AUGUSTINE'S TOWER HACKNEY.
SITE OF THE TOMB OF LORD OXFORD
and of NAVE OF THE CHURCH.

justify a bequest. Whether William of Stratford retired in 1604 or later, he had ample time to publish his works, if any such existed—as did Ben Jonson, for instance. He never made an effort to do so; and when he retired, left behind him some twenty unpublished plays without apparent interest in their fate. The publication of authentic plays ceased in 1604, on the death of Edward de Vere; and if William of Stratford was the poet, no reason is forthcoming why he interested himself in the publication of fifteen plays between 1594 and 1604; and, thereafter was content to see publication cease, excepting of three unauthorised plays in 1608-09, with regard to which he made no protest.

(e) Commendatory Verses by Ben Jonson and Hugh Holland. These commence:

To the Memory of My Beloved
The Author
Mr. William Shakespeare
and
What he has left us.

References are made to the Poet as

Soule of the Age
The applause! delight! the wonder of our stage!

And though thou hadst small Latine and lesse
Greeke,
From thence to honour thee, I would not seeke

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For names; but call forth thund'ring Æschilus.
He (the Poet) was not of an age, but for all time.

Sweet Swan of Avon! What a sight it were
to see thee in our waters yet appear.

Shine forth thou Starre of Poets.

This panegyric, as in the case of the Epistles, was written as an advertisement. Hence the "puff" regarding the "True and Original copies," and Ben Jonson could not foresee that in fullness of time Shakespeare would indeed be recognised as a Poet, "not of an age, but for all time." The panegyric is discounted by a reference to Shakespeare made only three years previously. In 1619 Jonson was staying with Drummond of Hawthornden, and in course of conversation made remarks about various literary men. All he had to say regarding Shakespeare, "the Soule of the Age," etc., was "that Shakspeer wanted arte. . . . Shakspeer in a play brought in a number of men saying they had suffered shipwreck in Bohemia, when there is no sea near by 100 miles." It is explained "that Shakespeare's way of writing did not altogether answer to his (Ben's) theory of what dramatic structure should be." But Ben Jonson seemed to have forgotten that Shakespeare had written *Venus*, *Lucrece* and the *Sonnets*.

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His third utterance is a selection from *Timber*, written some time between 1630 and 1637, the year of his death, and published in 1641:

De Shakespeare Nostrati I remember, the Players have often mentioned' it as an honour to *Shakespeare*, that in his writing (whatsoever he penn'd) hee never blotted a line. My answer hath beene, would he had blotted a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justifie mine owne candor (for I lov'd the man, and doe honour to his memory on this side idolatry) as much as any. . . . Hee was (indeed) honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent *Phantasie*; brave notions, and gentle notions, and gentle expressions. *Wherein hee flowed with that facility*, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stop'd. . . . But hee redeemed his vices, with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be prayd than to be pardoned.

This utterance is supposed to refer to Shakspeare of Stratford as author and player. But there is no record of any great friendship between Jonson and William of Stratford beyond the tradition of a drinking bout in March, 1616, in which he, Drayton, and "William," took part, with the result that the latter "died of a feavour there contracted." He was not mentioned in Shakspeare's will, as were Heminges and Condell.

Moreover, the sentence "Honour to his memory on this side Idolatry" does not ring altogether true.

Jonson caricatured Shakspeare as Sogliardo, as we have seen, significantly associating him with the Earl of Oxford as Sir Puntarvolo in *Every Man Out of His Humour*; and again referred probably to him in the *Pilgrimage to and Return from Parnassus*, in the lines:

With mouthing words that better wits have framed
They purchase lands, and now Esquires are namde,

as a player, not author; although *Venus, Lucrece* and several plays had been published, and some of the *Sonnets* were in circulation. When Shakspeare of Stratford died in 1616, he penned neither line nor verse to his memory. Ten years after his death he made a list of the great men of his acquaintance, which does not include the Stratford man. In fact, Shakspeare's death passed altogether unnoticed by any poet or dramatist, in spite of the reputation attached to the author of the Shakespearean works. In Stratford itself, where he should have towered above his contemporaries, there is no sign of his superiority on record; neither during his life nor on the occasion of his death. He was buried not as "the Poet and Dramatist" but as "Will Shakspeare, Gentleman"; and was not identified with Stratford, until described in the Folio as the "Swan of

Avon"; or, in fact, was not "recognised as the poet until seven years after his death."

(g) Verses by Leonard Digges and I. M.

The poet is definitely mentioned as Shakespeare, the pseudonym, a form which William of Stratford never used. Says Mr. Begley: "The Stratford man never had a 'Shake' in his name, nor yet his ancestors; and as to having a hyphen in the middle, all his people would have stared with amazement."

In this connection, Mr. Allen points out, that "out of forty-seven separate Quarto editions of the plays published before the Folio in 1623, thirteen are anonymous, and fifteen show the hyphenated form"; and asks for any other instance in literary history of an author, without protest, allowing his name to be hyphenated.

L. Digges refers to "thy Stratford moniment," an effigy which is surrounded with mystery. It apparently was in existence in 1623; but no one knows who erected it, when it was erected, or at whose cost. Sir G. Greenwood makes it clear that the present monument was not the one referred to in 1623.

Greenwood further comments on an allusion to Shakspeare of Stratford that was made in 1635, twelve years after the publication of the Folio. Cuthbert Burbage and others presented a petition to the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery (survivor of the "Incomparable

Paire") in connection with their rights in the Globe Theatre. They refer to their late partner, William Shakspere. What do they say? "To ourselves we joined those *deserving* men, Shakspeare, Heminges, Condell, Phillips and others, partners in the profits, etc."; and as to the Blackfriars, then, they say, they "placed *men players* which were Hemings, Condell, Shakspeare, etc." Says Greenwood: "To me it seems incredible that the Burbages should have thus written about Shakespeare, calling him just a 'man player' and speaking of him in the same terms as of the other players, viz., as a 'deserving man,' and nothing more, if indeed both they and the Lord Chamberlain knew, and all the world knew, that he was the 'Immortal Poet,' who was 'not of an age but for all time,' whose collected works, dedicated to the two Earls, to their everlasting honour, had been for twelve years before the public, and whose poems, dedicated to another great Earl, were as 'familiar as household words' to every man of the time who had the slightest pretension to literary taste or knowledge. . . . Why this extraordinary reticence—if Shakspeare and Shakespeare are identical?"

There can be only one answer, namely, that Shakspeare of Stratford, the above-mentioned "man player," as the Burbages knew, was not Shakespeare, or Shake-speare of the Folio.

It seems certain that influential supporters were

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connected with the Folio who do not appear. The players, Heminges and Condell, were only nominally responsible. The publishers could not have undertaken so considerable a venture without financial support. The assistance of at least an editor must have been available to advise as to the selection of the plays, some of which had been published anonymously, while others were previously unknown; the text approved, their order and classification; and more especially to account for the revision and marked improvement of the text in some cases before inclusion in the Folio. As instances: 1,081 new lines and many alterations in *Merry Wives*; 1,100 lines and a new scene in *King John*; 60 new lines and many alterations in *Othello*.

Says Greenwood (p. 415), after commenting on these improvements: "I only lay stress upon the important fact that here again is conclusive evidence of the careful revision and rewriting of Shakespeare's plays, by whomsoever done."

Again, whence came the initiation of the proposal? Certainly not from Stratford. There is no mention, as might be expected, of any executor or relative of William of Stratford in connection with the Folio.

The main stumbling-block is that Shakspeare of Stratford did not fill the part of the great Poet, nor did his fellow-players ever speak of him as an author.

Says Lee: "We have not the authority of

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Shakspeare for the fact of his authorship of any of the plays."

Setting aside his preoccupations, whether connected with his malt and other business, or with the theatre; passing over the lack of evidence regarding his education, culture, knowledge of foreign languages—for the real Shakespeare must have had a thorough knowledge of French and a working knowledge of Italian—he, if the author, cannot be acquitted of two charges: (1) he allowed the *Sonnets*, wherein he "unlocked his heart," to be pirated, and published under the name Shakespeare without sign of protest; and (2) he showed neglect of "pride of parentage" in his works, by not preserving his manuscripts—there is no record of such preservation—letting alone the matter of publication, which he was well able to afford.

It is therefore contended that

EDWARD DE VERE, THE EARL OF OXFORD, was the author of the *Plays*, *Poems* and *Sonnets* attributed to "Shakespeare."

In either case Ben Jonson occupies a central position; and his connection with the Earl's family becomes relevant. Colonel Ward, in his discussion on the subject, shows that on the accession of King James, Jonson began his successful career as a writer of masques. One of these, sandwiched between two plays by "Shaxberd," *Measure for Measure* and *The Comedy*

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of Errors, was performed in 1604 at the marriage of Sir Ed. (for Philip) Herbert and Lady Susan Vere. William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, took part in the masque, produced at his brother's wedding, and together with the latter in subsequent masques. Of the ladies concerned the names of three appear consistently: The Queen, Susan de Vere (Countess of Montgomery) and Alice Spencer (Dowager Countess of Derby), who were enthusiasts in these masques, written mostly by Jonson. Says Colonel Ward: "Ben Jonson's *Epigrams* . . . are dedicated to 'the most noble William, Earl of Pembroke.' One of these is addressed to the Earl of Pembroke himself, and another one to Susan, Countess of Montgomery. . . . This latter contains unmistakable echoes of lines from both of his introductory poems to the First Folio" (above quoted).

To Susan, Countess of Montgomery

Were they that named you prophets? Did they see
Even in the dew of grace, what you would be?
Or did our times require it to behold
A new Susanna equal to that old?

Were you advanced past those times to be
The light and mark unto Posterity?
Judge they that can: *Here I have raised to show*
A picture, which the world for yours must know
And like it too; if they look equally;
If not, 'tis fit for you, some should envy.

Says Colonel Ward:

If we compare the two sets of verses—the one to Susan de Vere and the other to William Shakespeare, it is difficult to resist the feeling that . . . the Shakespeare lines were distinctly in Jonson's mind when he addressed the poem to Susan de Vere. When he says, "Here I have raised to show A picture which the world for yours must know," may he not be alluding to some other picture, that the world had not recognised because of its unlikeness?

Nor were the publishers new to Shakespearean work. Aspley had published half the copies of the *Sonnets*; Smethwick two late editions of *Romeo and Juliet* and one of *Hamlet*; while Blount had published *Love's Martyr* by Chester, containing poems by "Ignoto" (probably Lord Lumley) and William "Shake-speare"; and nine years after the publication of the Folio had published Lyly's *Six Court Comedies*, written originally (as above shown), in collaboration with the Earl of Oxford. "Blount had been engaged in producing Shakespeare's work during Oxford's life; and his publication of Lyly's plays, with the missing lyrics, in 1632, shows that he probably was well aware of the de Vere secret" (Colonel Ward, p. 36).

On the death of the Earl of Oxford in 1604, his manuscripts would naturally have passed into the hands of his daughters and co-heiresses, Susan Countess of Montgomery, Elizabeth Countess

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of Derby, and Bridget Countess of Berkshire, who would become "the Grand Possessors," alluded to in the Preface of the unauthorised *Troilus and Cressida* Quarto published in 1604.

The three daughters of the Earl of Oxford may well have determined to publish the plays written by their father. The Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, the Countess Susan's brother-in-law and husband respectively, sons of Lady Pembroke, Oxford's friend, would have accepted the responsibility; engaged the publishers; and found the required financial backing. Ben Jonson was on intimate terms with the family; had known the Earl of Oxford both personally and as anonymous author of the Shakespearean works. He was doubtless made literary agent. In deference to the wishes expressed in the *Sonnets*, Oxford's anonymity was continued; and, as the maltster of Stratford had been regarded as author by the general public, his alleged authorship was continued in the Folio.

Whether Oxford's autographs were preserved or not must be uncertain; but in any case the Countesses, his daughters, would not have produced them, otherwise his identity would have been disclosed. They would have supplied "Fair Copies." Such must have been Oxford's practice during his lifetime, all transactions being conducted through a confidential agent. There can have been no direct communication between

the author and any publisher or company. Hence originated the assertion of the Players "Wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers," otherwise the "Fair Copies." Further, the passage in the Epistle and Preface (by Ben Jonson) to the effect that death intervened, and prevented the author from "having the fate, common with some, to be executor to his owne writings," was, as Ben Jonson knew, literally true in Oxford's case, who died after publishing fifteen plays in succession, after which authentic publications ceased until renewed in the Folio.

The editors may have been Francis Bacon, whose connection with the publication of the Folio is not easily denied, the Earl of Derby, and Ben Jonson; but even then, only in an advisory capacity. Their open collaboration in the circumstances would have been impossible. The two former had probably been members of "the Group"; and had controlled the revision and completion of plays after the death of Oxford.

We next come to Ben Jonson's *De Shakespeare Nostrati*, a tribute delivered at least seven years after the publication of the Folio, the subject of which would seem to have been the Earl of Oxford. The regret that the poet had not "blotted a thousand lines" is intelligible. Edward de Vere was shown to have been a prolific writer at the age of twenty-eight, and must have written

many plays that have not survived. Some of them no doubt contained inferior work. Sir E. Chambers writes :

I am prepared to accept some very poor work as Shakespeare's. He must have been subject to moods, which were not all compatible with concentration on what he was writing. During a considerable period he was under the shadow of some preoccupation or disillusionment, the cause of which remains obscure ; and the life and subtlety of his style suffered.

We do not know what evidence there may be regarding the shadows which crossed the life of the actor and busy Maltster of Stratford—but, applied to Edward de Vere, as the previous pages have shown, these words are almost biographical. Again, the Earl's facility or volubility in conversation was a trait which Jonson had himself referred to in *Cynthia's Revels*, where Oxford appears as Amorphous.

Wherein hee flowed with that facility (*Nostrati*).

Says Mr. Allen :

I suppose the Earl's hail-fellow-well-met attitude towards companions of the moment . . . is in the main caricatured by Mercury. "He that is with him is Amorphous, a traveller. . . . He is his own promoter in every place. The wife of the ordinary gives him his diet to maintain her table in discourse, which indeed is a mere tyranny over her other guests, *for he will usurp all the talk.*"

Gabriel Harvey also wrote of the Earl: "Not the like Discourser for tongue."

Again, what better friend had the players than the Earl of Oxford? Mr. Allen writes:

A familiar sight to all frequenters of London's City Cathedral Church must have been the figure of Oxford, strolling down the centre aisle and out again by the west door to the book shops . . . thence onward to the "Ordinary" at one of the popular City-inn taverns . . . where easy, amenable, hail-fellow-well-met he would jest with and criticise the players much in the *Hamlet* vein. . . . Thus he appears in London town—this fantastic courtier, dimly known or guessed at, here and there as the mysterious Shakespeare.

No doubt he would be on equally friendly terms with the playwrights, Ben Jonson among them; and the latter might well have "loved" and admired the democratic dramatist, poet, Earl; and his reference to "idolatry" may have been suggested by *Sonnet* 105 (as above stated):

Let not my love be called idolatry.

It was desirable that the Folio should attract buyers, and Ben Jonson's main task was "window-dressing"; but he sailed as near the truth as was possible in alluding to Oxford's manuscript "Fair Copies"; and to the deprivation by death of his opportunity of completing the publication of his works.

THE ANONYMITY OF THE EARL OF OXFORD

The question is often asked as to why Oxford wrote anonymously. During his life the answer is obvious, and is given by Lord Lumley, who, in referring to the courtier poets of the time, adds: "If their doings could be found out and made public with the rest," implying that their names were not published. But eighteen years had elapsed by the time the *Folio* appeared, and the reasons would seem to be less clear. It is possible that his relatives, the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, together with Ben Jonson, continued the pseudonym which Oxford had used in deference to custom; or, they may have been influenced by the fact that the plays contained many political and topical references; and that they had emanated from a group, some members of which were still living, who would be involved if the name of their leader were disclosed. The transparent reason, however, is to be found in the *Sonnets*, in which the poet expresses a wish that his identity be not revealed. Chambers, as quoted in the last chapter, refers to the disharmony prevailing between the tone of the plays and that of the *Sonnets*; to the poet's "perturbed spirit behind the quiet mask," the disappointments of life and his preoccupation with thoughts of death. Dr. Rendall finds traces of chronic and recurrent insomnia (S. 27, 28), which may account for "that

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note of melancholy which runs with a crescendo movement through the course of the *Sonnets*, as part of their abiding charm." Even the tragedies, *Lear* (1598), *Macbeth* (1599), *Hamlet* (1604), were written under conditions of dejection and despair, which seem to have induced a state of temporary mental collapse. Dr. Rendall finds expression of "a craving for immortality, or at least escape from annihilation, in a wistful desire or conviction that his poetry shall survive":

My life hath in this line (my verses) some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay. (S. 74)

But:

My name be buried where my body is. (S. 71)

Do not so much as my poor name rehearse. (S. 72)

The poet could not have written more clearly, and these appeals were made either by Shakspeare of Stratford or by Edward de Vere.

Let us compare the life-history of the two men from 1593 (*Venus*) to 1604. The latter year is significant. It was the year of Oxford's death: the year in which the composition of the *Sonnets* and the authentic publication of the plays ceased: and, lastly, it was the year in which Shakspeare is last heard of as a London actor, and (according to Masson) went to reside permanently in Stratford. It is open to consideration whether these events are connected with each other.

After his departure from Stratford in 1587, we first hear of Shakspeare in London in 1595 as an actor. In 1596 he is assessed on property worth £5. In 1597 he buys New Place, one of the largest houses in Stratford, for £60 (present value £600). In 1598 he acts in *Every Man Out of His Humour*; and is recorded as being in possession of "a store of $10\frac{1}{4}$ quarters of malt"—one of the largest holdings in Stratford. These were lean years, and the maltsters were speculating. In 1599 he becomes a shareholder in the Globe Theatre. In 1602 he buys property in Stratford for £320 (£3,200). In 1604 he sues Rogers in the Stratford courts. In 1603 he acts in *Sejanus*. In 1605 he buys a moiety of the Stratford tithes for £440 (£4,400). This wealth could not have been acquired by Shakspeare as a dramatist and co-sharer in the Globe only; and, even on this imperfect record, it is clear that Shakspeare was a strenuous business man. In addition, if he be the poet, we are to suppose that between 1593 and 1605 he produced two long classical poems and twenty-eight plays, and that between 1595 and 1599, at the age of thirty-one to thirty-five, he not only wrote the *Sonnets* but lived through the experiences revealed by these tragic poems, for the "Fair Youth" and the "Dark Lady" must have passed through his life. Finally, he wearies of existence; but let the name of William Shakspeare of Stratford, poet, actor, maltster, etc., be forgotten.

Having thus "buried" the poet (about 1599-1600) he pursues the even tenor of his way, without trace of any mental storm; sues Rogers; acts in *Sejanus*; buys the lease of tithes; and passes prosperous and contented days until he is buried as "Will Shakspeare, Gentleman." At a time when he was on the flood-tide of prosperity there is no evidence of any crisis, nor of circumstances to justify a desire for anonymity. Says Dover Wilson:

There is not a hint, either in contemporary record or local tradition, that Shakespeare suffered disability or disease of any sort during his later years. On the contrary, all we can glean points to cheerfulness and happiness.

The dual existence, above compared, surely passes beyond the limits of literary credulity.

Let us now consider the life-history of Edward de Vere, during the period 1593-1604, assuming that he be the poet. The *Sonnets* had been commenced by 1590, when he would have reached "forty winters." In 1588 his wife, Anne Cecil, died; and owing to this sorrow and a combination of causes, he withdrew from Court. Among these, doubtless, were the charges of 1576-80, including the allegation that he was a "bastard," the failure to obtain some office of state, and the "loss of good name." "In disgrace with fortune and men's eyes" he became a recluse and devoted himself to literature. It was in 1598, ten years

after his retirement and six before his death, that Meres paid tribute to him as the best living author of comedy.

The period from 1593-1604 is remarkable for practically the entire Shakespearean output, and Mr. Allen, Admiral Holland, and Mrs. Clark have only brought fresh evidence to prove what the late Lord Sydenham, Sir George Greenwood and others have long maintained, that many of the plays were of older dates than those usually accepted; also that their inner history can be solved by the discovery of allusions to the political and social events of the period. The Earl of Oxford was merely revising, with the aid of a "Group," plays which dated so far back as 1572.

We have, therefore, ample material to justify the crisis of despair reflected in the tragedies, and the pathos of the *Sonnets*; letting alone the personal history contained in these poems, which no one has yet been able to reveal, but which is more probable in the case of Edward de Vere than in that of Shakspeare. Such of the former's lyrics, described by Lee as "exquisite," as have been preserved, contain a dominant note of sadness. For instance:

What pain is greater than the grief of mind?
 The grief of mind that eats in every vein;
 In every vein that leaves such clots behind;
 Such clots behind that breed such bitter pain;
 So bitter pain that none shall ever find
 What plague is greater than the grief of mind?

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It is in accord with his life-history that, in 1600, at the age of fifty, within four years of passing into the valley of the dark shadow, he should have laid bare his soul, as suggested by Chambers in a passage that, applied to Edward de Vere, is biographical. We may well conceive his asking posterity to accept his works in memory of him; but yet, to bury his name, that of DE VERE, dating from the Conquest.

So also may he have appealed, as Hamlet, to Horatio, his cousin Sir Horace, to "report him and his cause aright to the unsatisfied." And:

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story.

It is submitted that the above quoted passages from the *Sonnets* are in accord with the life-story of Edward de Vere; and, this being so, the promoters of the *Folio* had no option but to continue his anonymity in the pseudonym which he had always used. The Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, his relatives and Ben Jonson, knew the secret. The actors, Hemmings and Condell, did not know. It should be noted that their names were only included in the Will as an afterthought, in March, 1616, whereas the Will was drafted in January; and about this time Ben Jonson and Shakspeare had a drinking bout which led to the

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death of the latter. It has been suggested that the preparations for the Folio were even then in train.

CONCLUSION

Apart from the external evidence submitted in these pages, the resemblance between the "Welbeck" and "Ashbourne" portraits, the almost certain discovery of the *Sonnets* at Hackney, it must be admitted that Edward de Vere possessed the qualifications required of "Shakespeare." A cultured aristocrat, he knew French and Italian; had lived in Italy; Padua, Venice, Milan, Verona were all known to him. Poet, playwright, courtier, patron of the drama, he was in touch with the political movements and the versatile spirits of the age; while in the judgement of the best critics, his compositions were second to none. His life-history contained all the tragedy that we surmise fell to the lot of "Shakespeare," and that is reflected in the *Sonnets* and the plays. He apparently found in his second marriage a quiet breakwater, for the widowed Countess Elizabeth Trentham desired in her Will (1612) "to be buried in the church of Hackney within the county of Middlesex, as near unto the bodie of my said late deare and noble lorde and husband as maye bee, and that to be done as privately and with as little pomp and ceremonie as possibly may

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bee; only I will that there be in the said church erected for us a Tombe fitting our degree."

The tomb was situated on the north side of the chancel of the old church of St. Augustine, which was replaced in 1780 by the new church of St. John. The old Tower, however, still remains, from which the familiar "Surly, sullen bell" of the *Sonnets* tolled for the funeral of Edward de Vere on June 24, 1604.

APPENDIX

THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP

1933

Founded 1922, under the Presidency of the late Sir George Greenwood.

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Lieut.-Col. M. W. DOUGLAS, C.S.I., C.I.E.

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THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP

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SOME OF THE BOOKS ON THE SHAKESPEARE PROBLEM WRITTEN OR EDITED BY MEMBERS OF THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP

Allen, Percy; SHAKESPEARE, JONSON, AND WILKINS AS
BORROWERS. (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row,
E.C. 4.)

Prof. R. P. Cowl, in his introduction, says that this book is of interest as "the first attempt that has been made, apparently, by a dramatic critic to apply his knowledge and experience of the Theatre to the solution of problems that have been left hitherto in the hands of Shakespearean scholars."

—, —; SHAKESPEARE AND CHAPMAN AS TOPICAL
DRAMATISTS. (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row,
E.C. 4.)

Shows Lord Oxford to have been the historic original of Hamlet; and that Chapman, while secretly imitating *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, alternately lauds and attacks them.

—, —; THE CASE FOR EDWARD DE VERE, SEVEN-
TEENTH EARL OF OXFORD, AS "SHAKESPEARE."
(Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row, E.C. 4.)

A full statement of the Oxford case, based on the latest discoveries.

—, —; THE OXFORD-SHAKESPEARE CASE COR-
ROBORATED. (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row,
E.C. 4.)

A sequel to "The Case for Edward de Vere."

—, —; THE LIFE-STORY OF EDWARD DE VERE
AS "WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE." (Hutchinson & Co.,
Paternoster Row, E.C. 4.)

Mr. Allen shows the extraordinary intimacy that exists between the life of Lord Oxford and the Shakespeare Plays. He identifies no fewer than 111 of the characters in the plays with actual Elizabethans.

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Allen, Percy; *THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE AND CHAPMAN IN RELATION TO FRENCH HISTORY*, with an Introduction by Marjorie Bowen. (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row, E.C. 4. 1933.)

The author shows that *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, Chapman's *Bussy Plays*, and d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*, are all linked together as allegories on sixteenth-century French History.

—, —; ANNE CECIL, ELIZABETH AND OXFORD. (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row, E.C. 4. 1934.)

Allen, Percy and Ernest; *LORD OXFORD AND "SHAKESPEARE": A REPLY TO JOHN DRINKWATER*. (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row, E.C. 4. 1933.)

A devastating reply to Mr. John Drinkwater's attack on the Oxford theory in his "Shakespeare" (1933). It is noteworthy that Mr. Drinkwater is the first and only author who has so far challenged the Oxford case.

Bayley, Harold; *THE SHAKESPEARE SYMPHONY*. (1906.)

The author shows that there was a unity underlying the Elizabethan Drama similar to the unity of an orchestra under a great conductor.

Clark, Mrs. Eva Turner; *AXIOPHILUS, OR OXFORD ALIAS SHAKESPEARE*. (The Knickerbocker Press, New York. 1926.)

An identification of Lord Oxford with the poet "Axiophilus" alluded to by Gabriel Harvey in one of his marginal notes.

—, —; *SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR WRITING*.

Mrs. Clark shows that most of the Shakespeare Plays were originally acted at Court during the 'seventies and 'eighties. She also gives a number of topical allusions which point to Lord Oxford as the author.

—, —; *THE SATIRICAL COMEDY, LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST*. (William Farquhar Payson, New York. 1933.)

The author shows, with a wealth of topical allusion, that *Love's Labour's Lost* was written beyond all reasonable doubt in 1578.

APPENDIX

Connes, Georges, Professor of English Literature at the University of Dijon; **THE SHAKESPEARE MYSTERY.** (Abridged and Translated by a Member of the Shakespeare Fellowship.)

Witty and comprehensive; an excellent short introduction to the whole subject of Shakespeare authorship.

Dawtre, John; **THE FALSTAFF SAGA.** (1930.)

Captain Nicholas Dawtre, an ancestor of the author, is identified as the prototype of Sir John Falstaff. Obtainable from the author, 339 London Road, Reading.

Douglas, Lieut.-Col. Montagu W., C.S.I., C.I.E.; **THE EARL OF OXFORD AS "SHAKESPEARE": AN OUTLINE OF THE CASE.** (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row, E.C. 4.)

A clear and concise statement of the Oxford theory by the President of the Shakespeare Fellowship. An ideal book for anybody who wishes to be initiated into the de Vere authorship question.

Forrest, H. T. S., Indian Civil Service; **THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.** (Chapman & Dodd. 1923.)

A new theory of the *Sonnets* in which the author, as the title shows, apportions the *Sonnets* among five poets.

Frisbee, George; **EDWARD DE VERE, A GREAT ELIZABETHAN.**

A book dealing with cyphers and acrostics.

Greenwood, Sir George; the first President of the Shakespeare Fellowship; **THE SHAKESPEARE PROBLEM RE-STATED.** (John Lane. 1908.)

The most impressive attack ever delivered on the orthodox position. Cardinal Gasquet, the distinguished historian and scholar, wrote to the author: "I cannot think how anyone who will follow you, can fail to admit the strength of your thesis. . . . I did not think the case against the 'Stratford rustic' was so strong, or nearly so strong, as you have shown it to be."

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Greenwood, Sir George; *IN RE SHAKESPEARE: BEECHING v. GREENWOOD: REJOINDER ON BEHALF OF THE DEFENDANT.* (John Lane. 1909.)

A crushing reply to Canon Beeching's attack on his book. Sir George represents himself as "Seeking the bubble reputation even in the Canon's mouth."

—, —; *THE VINDICATORS OF SHAKESPEARE: A REPLY TO CRITICS.* (John Lane. 1911.)

—, —; *IS THERE A SHAKESPEARE PROBLEM? WITH A REPLY TO J. M. ROBERTSON AND ANDREW LANG.* (John Lane. 1916.)

Sir George here completely shatters two Stratfordian attacks made on his anti-Stratfordian position.

—, —; *SIR SIDNEY LEE'S NEW EDITION OF "A LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE": SOME WORDS OF CRITICISM.* (John Lane. 1916.)

—, —; *SHAKESPEARE'S LAW AND LATIN—HOW I WAS "EXPOSED" BY MR. J. M. ROBERTSON, M.P.* (Watts & Co. 1916.)

It is most unwise for a layman to attempt to "expose" the ignorance of a lawyer concerning legal matters—as Mr. Robertson discovered, greatly to his cost.

—, —; *SHAKESPEARE'S LAW.*

—, —; *BEN JONSON AND SHAKESPEARE.*

All Stratfordians should be made to pass an examination on this book before they venture to declare that the "monumental and irrefragable testimony of Ben Jonson" proves that William Shakspeare of Stratford was the author of the plays.

—, —; *BACONIAN ESSAYS*, by E. W. Smithson, with an Introduction and two Essays by Sir George Greenwood.

Sir George's essays constitute the best statement of the evidence regarding "The Northumberland Manuscript" and the pseudonym "Labeo."

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Greenwood, Sir George ; LEE, SHAKESPEARE, AND A TERTIUM QUID.

The author is here seen at his wittiest as a controversialist; and he is merciless in his exposure of Sir Sidney Lee and other Stratfordians.

—, —; THE SHAKESPEARE SIGNATURES AND "SIR THOMAS MORE."

A definite refutation of the utterly untenable palæographical thesis that "Shakespeare" wrote Hand D in "The Play of Sir Thomas More."

—, —; SHAKESPEARE'S HANDWRITING AND THE NORTHUMBERLAND MANUSCRIPT. (Watts & Co. 1925.)

—, —; THE STRATFORD BUST AND THE DROESHOUT ENGRAVING.

Holland, Rear-Admiral Hubert H., C.B., R.N.; SHAKESPEARE THROUGH OXFORD GLASSES.

A valuable study of topical allusions in the plays, all of which point unmistakably to Lord Oxford as the author.

—, —; SHAKESPEARE, OXFORD, AND ELIZABETHAN TIMES. (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row, E.C. 4. 1934.)

Lefranc, Professor Abel, Professeur au Collège de France; Membre de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Institut de France; SOUS LE MASQUE DE "WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE": WILLIAM STANLEY, 6ME COMTE DE DERBY. (Payot, Paris. 1919.)

Lord Derby married Elizabeth de Vere, and was therefore the Earl of Oxford's son-in-law. Prof. Lefranc argues persuasively in favour of Derby's authorship of the Shakespeare plays. In 1599 Derby was "busied only in penning comedies for the common players."

LORD OXFORD WAS SHAKESPEARE

Lefranc, Professor Abel; *LA REALITÉ DANS "LE SONGE D'UNE NUIT D'ÉTÉ.* (Geneva. 1920.)

Proves that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was first acted at the marriage of William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, to Elizabeth de Vere on January 24, 1595; and that Oberon in Act II, Scene 1, refers to the Elvetham celebrations of 1591.

—, —; *HÉLÈNE DE TOURNON: CELLE QUI MOURUT D'AMOUR ET L'OPHELIE D'HAMLET.* (Paris. 1926.)

Shows a close parallelism between the story of Hélène de Tournon, as related in the *Memoirs of Marguerite de Valois*, and Ophelia.

Looney, J. Thomas; *SHAKESPEARE IDENTIFIED IN EDWARD DE VERE, THE SEVENTEENTH EARL OF OXFORD.*

Mr. Looney is the discoverer of Lord Oxford's authorship of the Shakespeare Plays. In this invaluable book he presents the case with unanswerable logic. How conclusive his arguments are may be judged from the fact that no Stratfordian scholar has ever dared to try and refute him. Obtainable from Francis Clarke, Gower Book Shop, 13 Duke's Road, Euston Road, W.C. 1.

—, —; *THE POEMS OF EDWARD DE VERE, SEVENTEENTH EARL OF OXFORD: with Biographical Notice and Notes.*

A useful collection of all Lord Oxford's known poems, as well as the poems in Lyly's plays, which Mr. Looney attributes to Lord Oxford.

Phillips, Gerald, M.A.; *THE TRAGIC STORY OF SHAKESPEARE: DISCLOSED IN THE SONNETS AND THE LIFE OF EDWARD DE VERE, SEVENTEENTH EARL OF OXFORD.*

Mr. Phillips argues that the "Fair Youth" of the *Sonnets* was an illegitimate son of Lord Oxford, and that the "Dark Lady" was his second wife, Elizabeth Trentham.

—, —; *SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.* (Basil Blackwell. 1934.)

APPENDIX

Ranson, F. L.; and Whitehead, L. H. H.; LAVENHAM
PAST AND PRESENT. (Published by F. L. Ranson,
38 Market Place, Lavenham, Suffolk. 1930.)

A guide to the town and church of Lavenham, a mediæval East
Anglian manor full of memorials of the de Vere family.

Rendall, Gerald H., B.D., Litt.D., LL.D.; SHAKESPEARE
SONNETS AND EDWARD DE VERE. (John
Murray. 1930.)

The author, after a scholarly and detailed study of the *Sonnets*,
recognises both in them and in the Plays the handiwork of Lord
Oxford.

—, —; SHAKESPEARE: HANDWRITING AND
SPELLING.

Dr. Rendall shows that the 1609 edition of the *Sonnets* was almost
certainly printed from copy written in the Italian script, which
Lord Oxford always used, and not in the Gothic script of the six
"Shaksper signatures."

—, —; PERSONAL CLUES IN SHAKESPEARE POEMS
AND SONNETS. (John Lane, The Bodley Head.
1934.)

Singleton, Esther; SHAKESPERIAN FANTASIAS. (Privately
printed, New York. 1929.)

A charming set of dream stories, poetically imagined round the
personality of Edward de Vere.

—, —; THE SHAKESPEARE GARDEN. (William
Farquhar Payson, New York. 1931.) (Reprinted
from the first edition of 1922.)

Mrs. Eva Turner Clark, in an Introduction, says: "It was through
the eyes of Edward de Vere that Esther Singleton visualised the
gardens of Shakespeare's Plays in her last years."

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Slater, Gilbert, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.Hist.S.; SEVEN SHAKESPEARES: A DISCUSSION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR VARIOUS THEORIES WITH REGARD TO SHAKESPEARE'S IDENTITY. (Apply Secretary, Shakespeare Fellowship.)

A scholarly investigation of the connection between "Shakespeare" and seven claimants to the authorship of the Plays and Poems—Lords Oxford, Derby, and Rutland, Sir Walter Raleigh, Francis Bacon, Marlowe, and the Countess of Pembroke. An admirable exposition of the "Group Theory."

Standen, Gilbert; SHAKESPEARE AUTHORSHIP: A SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE.

A shilling booklet which gives the circumstantial evidence pointing to Lord Oxford as the author of the *Sonnets*.

Ward, Colonel B. R., C.M.G.; THE MYSTERY OF MR. W. H.

A record of researches at Hackney which confirm the "Oxford" theory. The original manifesto of the Shakespeare Fellowship.

—, B. M.; A HUNDRETH SUNDRIE FLOWRES: from the original edition of 1573, with an Introduction and Notes. (Etchells & Macdonald. 1925.)

Mr Ward shows that this was the first of the Elizabethan anthologies; and that the Earl of Oxford published the collection, as well as being the author of sixteen of the poems.

—, —; THE SEVENTEENTH EARL OF OXFORD. (John Murray. 1928.)

A biography based on five years' research. Useful to all students of the "Oxford" theory.

